

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED
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WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Seventeenth Session

Rome, 29-June to 10 July 1987

REPORT OF THE THIRTY THIRD SESSION OF
THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION FAO,
ROME, 30 JUNE - 4 JULY 1986

INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Committee held its Thirty Third Session at FAO Headquarters, Rome, from 30 June to 4 July 1986. The Executive Committee was presided over by the Chairman of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mr. E.F. Kimbrell (United States of America) and in the presence of two of its three Vice-Chairmen, Dr. E.R. Mendez (Mexico) and Dr. L. Twum-Danso (Ghana). The following representatives from the geographic locations mentioned were present, for Africa, Mr. M.B. Mboundja from Cameroon; for Asia, Dr. Baik Duck Woo, from the Republic of Korea; for Latin America and the Caribbean, Ing. J. Piazzzi, from Argentina; for North America, Dr. N.W. Tape from Canada; for the South-West Pacific, Mr. B.A. Schick from Australia. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) was present. Also present were Dr. F.G. Winarno (Indonesia), who, following the resignation of the current Coordinator for Asia, had chaired the Fifth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia and who had been nominated by the Committee for appointment as Codex Coordinator for Asia by the Seventeenth Session of the Commission, as well as Dr. J. Acosta-Aleman (Cuba) who had been designated by the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Minister Ing. R. Darias Rodés (Cuba), to attend in his unavoidable absence.

2. Apologies for absence were received from Dr. Ms. A. Brincker (Denmark), a Vice-Chairman of the Commission and Minister Ing. R. Darias Rodés (Cuba), Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean.

OPENING ADDRESS

3. The Session was opened by Dr. R.K. Malik, outgoing Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, who welcomed the members of the Executive Committee on behalf of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO. He referred to action being taken to increase the visibility of Codex work. He mentioned specifically a paper being prepared for the next session of FAO's Committee on Agriculture (March 1987) on the Role of Food Quality and Standards in Food Security Trade and Health, case studies being prepared concerning the economic impact of Codex work on trade, and an information booklet being prepared on the importance and value of Codex work. He also

stressed the importance of the item of the agenda dealing with the future direction of the work of the Programme. He mentioned that the Programme continued to be regarded as a high priority programme in FAO. He wished his successor, Mr. J.R. Lupien, new Chief of the Programme every success in the task that lay before him.

4. Mr. J.R. Lupien, Chief, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, expressed his intention to carry forward the work of the Programme and his desire to work in close cooperation with WHO, particularly in the area of food safety. He stated that he wished to make the work of the Codex more effective in developing countries.

5. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation to Dr. Malik for his excellent contribution to the progress of the work of the Programme and welcomed the new Chief of the Programme, Mr. J.R. Lupien.

ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)

6. The Executive Committee adopted the provisional agenda for the session. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) indicated that he would make available to the members of the Executive Committee extracts from the Report of the 15th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe concerning Rule VI.3 and concerning the appointment of Coordinator for Europe, to facilitate reporting on the above-mentioned session of the Coordinating Committee (agenda item 15). Dr. F. Käferstein (WHO) indicated that under agenda item 23 (other business) he would furnish the Committee with information concerning a recently adopted Resolution of the World Health Assembly on Infant and Young Child Feeding (WHA 39.28).

PROGRESS REPORT ON PUBLICATION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS AND ON ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS AND MAXIMUM LIMITS FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES (Agenda Item 2)

7. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 86/33/2. It noted with satisfaction that Volume I (Explanatory Notes on the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission), Volume XVI (Standards for Milk Products) and Volume XVII (Contaminants) were now available and would be issued shortly to governments. A complete list of the various volumes of the Codex Alimentarius had been given in the Appendix to document CX/EXEC 86/33/2.

8. Concerning acceptances, the Executive Committee took note of the progress recorded in document CX/EXEC 86/33/2, which set out the replies which had been received on this topic additional to the information which had been published in ALINORM 85/2 for the Sixteenth Session of the Commission. Statements from Canada, China, Costa Rica, Cuba, Czechoslovakia, Finland, India, Madagascar, Mauritius, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Thailand, USA, Venezuela and Zimbabwe were contained in document CX/EXEC 86/33/2. Further acceptances from Canada and Cuba were also brought to the attention of the Executive Committee verbally, as well as a response from Switzerland which showed that certain positive steps were being taken in Switzerland vis-à-vis Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues.

9. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. F. Rossier (Switzerland) referred to a pilot study which had been prepared for consideration by the Coordinating Committee for Europe. The study was a review of replies to a questionnaire which had been issued to European countries. The questionnaire had sought the views of European countries regarding the acceptance of three Codex standards, which had been selected by the Committee for the purposes of the exercise. The Coordinator for Europe indicated that no firm

conclusions on this subject could yet be reached, because not enough replies had been received.

10. The Coordinator for Europe thought that one of the obstacles to acceptance might be the number of food additives provided for in Codex standards. He thought that another obstacle seemed to be the amount of detail in some of the standards. He favoured the free circulation idea, rather than formal acceptance. Switzerland intended to carry out a comparative study between Codex standards and Swiss food legislation. He also referred to protectionism in the use of standards and expressed concern at the too frequent amendment of the standards, which had led to some difficulties in Switzerland.

11. The Representative of the Region of Africa, Mr. M.B. Mboundja (Cameroon) expressed concern about the use of DDT, which was still being used in Africa, but was not accepted for use in Europe. He thought steps should be taken to phase out the manufacture of DDT. The Executive Committee agreed to bring the concern of the Representative of the Region of Africa to the notice of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues.

12. Concerning the Codex standards, the Representative of the Region of Africa stressed the importance of adequate infrastructure, including laboratory facilities, in order to apply the standards.

13. The Representative of the Region of Asia stated that in the Republic of Korea a study was under way concerning residues of pesticides on major agricultural crops. The study was expected to be completed soon, following which the Republic of Korea hoped to be able to accept some Codex MRLs about the end of 1987. He thought that one of the reasons why many countries in the Region of Asia had not yet accepted the Codex MRLs was not that they were very stringent but rather that countries in the Region had not yet completed their studies on residue levels.

14. The Executive Committee wished to express its appreciation to those countries which had given further positive responses on the subject of acceptances in order to achieve the goals of the Programme. The Executive Committee expressed the hope that other countries would soon be able to respond favourably on this topic.

PROGRESS REPORT ON DISTRIBUTION ARRANGEMENTS REGARDING THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS (Agenda Item 3)

15. The Secretariat recalled that the Commission, at its last session, had agreed that it was necessary to increase the availability of the Codex Alimentarius and, as a result, increase the visibility of the work of the Commission. Accordingly the Secretariat had taken steps to produce an information booklet on Codex work which was presently in the course of preparation. This booklet, together with a working paper being developed for the next session of FAO's Committee on Agriculture (COAG), as well as some case studies on the economic impact of Codex on trade in food commodities were expected to result in the work of the Commission being more widely known and in a greater demand for Codex publications.

16. Following discussion between the Secretariat and the FAO Publications Division, it had been tentatively agreed that the Codex Alimentarius, following revision and amendment, could be made more readily available through the FAO Publications Sales Agents throughout the world. The Secretariat had also been advised that probably the best arrangement would be to continue to regard the Codex Alimentarius as an unpriced publication, but for which a small handling charge to cover postage, etc. would have to

be paid. The question of format and presentation and other aspects would be discussed by the interested services of FAO.

17. The Chief of the FAO Editorial Branch was of the opinion that the system of FAO Publications Sales Agents would contribute significantly to the availability of the Codex Alimentarius. In any event, the present system of FAO acting as sole distributor was not adequate and was becoming very costly in terms of mailing charges. In view of the need to revise extensively practically all Codex standards after the next (17th) session of the Commission, it would be more sensible to think of issuing a revised Codex Alimentarius rather than a wide range of amendments. Taking the various means available to distribute Codex documents, the loose leaf system presently being used was not very suitable.

18. The Representative of the Region of North America Dr. N.W. Tape (Canada) expressed the opinion that modern methods of information distribution using computer data banks should also be explored. The Representative of the South West Pacific Region, Mr. B.A. Schick (Australia) supported the need to increase the availability of the Codex Alimentarius and was also of the view that modern communications systems involving computers should be used to enhance availability. He cautioned against commercial arrangements with sales agents which would make the Codex Alimentarius a priced publication and which could prevent its distribution free of charge, either by the Codex Secretariat or through mechanisms existing at the national level.

19. The Executive Committee was informed that technically there would be no problem in FAO in producing and disseminating the Codex Alimentarius using compact computer discs and to involve other organizations in an on-line data base arrangement. There was no reason why the two systems of publishing the Codex Alimentarius (conventional printing methods and computerized systems) should not coexist. In response to a question the Executive Committee was informed (through information received from the FAO Library) that most developing countries would not be in a position to use on-line computerized publication arrangements.

20. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) was of the opinion that the current system of providing supplements to volumes of the Codex Alimentarius was not satisfactory and that the loose leaf presentation at present used required the issue of replacement pages. The Executive Committee noted that from a handling point of view the advice which had been received from the FAO Editorial Branch was that loose leaf systems with binders were cumbersome and that bound volumes would make the Codex Alimentarius easier to handle.

21. The Executive Committee appreciated the efforts made by the Secretariat in exploring all avenues to increase the availability of the Codex Alimentarius, including the question of new format and presentation. The Committee agreed with the views of the Representative of the Region of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ing. J. Piazza (Argentina) and of the representative of the Coordinator for that region, Dr. J. Acosta-Alemafiy (Cuba) that the Codex Alimentarius should not be a priced publication. The Secretariat assured the Executive Committee that the revised version of the Codex Alimentarius would not be a priced publication, and that the intention was to make copies of it more readily available through FAO Sales Agents. The only charges involved would be handling charges to cover despatch, postage costs etc. A certain number of copies of the Codex Alimentarius would, as before continue to be made available to governments free of charge.

22. The Representative of the Region of North America, Dr. N.W. Tape (Canada) expressed concern about the late issue of documents arising from sessions of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) and of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR). These important documents were needed by the respective Codex committees and governments in carrying out their task. The FAO Joint Secretary of JECFA gave an outline of the various outputs of that Expert Committee, including the recent issue of an up-date of the Food Additives Data System and of the Summary and Conclusions paper following the recent session of JECFA. The summary paper was an attempt to respond to the need for an immediate dissemination of information following the conclusions of each JECFA session. It was indicated by the Representative of the Region of North America, that such summary reports did not appear to be totally adequate for the purposes of governments and of the CCFA and that it was essential to speed up the publication of the report and other documents arising from JECFA.

23. The FAO Joint Secretary of the JMPR pointed to the outputs of that Expert Body and explained that, for practical reasons, it had been found necessary to separate the toxicological and residues data into two separate publications. Following certain changes in the preparation and typing of the outputs of the JMPR, it has been possible for the report of the JMPR and Part 1 of the Evaluations (Residues Information) to be produced in record time. Further attempts would be made to improve the situation. However, FAO could not publish the part containing the toxicological summaries until received from WHO in camera-ready form.

24. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for making all efforts to ensure the timely availability of the various documents arising from the sessions of JECFA and of the JMPR. The WHO Joint Secretary of the Commission (CAC) undertook to bring to the attention of the responsible persons in his Organization the need to speed up the publication of the report of JECFA and the toxicological summaries for which WHO had responsibility.

PROGRESS REPORT ON COMPUTERIZATION OF CODEX MAXIMUM LIMITS FOR PESTICIDE RESIDUES AND ACCEPTANCES (Agenda Item 4)

25. The Executive Committee received a report by the Secretariat on developments concerning the computerization of Codex maximum residue limits (MRLs) and acceptance notifications (CX/EXEC 86/33/3). It noted that funds had been allocated for the development of a computer programme for handling the potentially enormous number of individual declarations of acceptance of Codex MRLs. The programme, which was hoped to be finalized during 1986, was intended to store and process information on Codex MRLs, including the revised food and feed classification system and acceptances received. In response to a question by the Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland), the Secretariat explained that the word processing component of the programme would enable the Secretariat to obtain, in camera-ready form, the various Codex documents dealing with MRLs and the publication on acceptances. The Computerized programme would, in due course, be capable of producing printouts in English, French and Spanish. On request, printouts of up-to-date information on the current status of acceptances could be made available for given pesticides, food commodities or countries. It was also intended to have the data base available on line and on compact discs. The computerized data system would be kept up-to-date by the Secretariat.

26. The Representative of the Region of North America, Dr. N.W. Tape (Canada) drew attention to the revised food and feed classification system which appeared to be very detailed and which sometimes represented a departure from the previous food classification system which governments had been using to develop their notifications of acceptance.

27. The Secretariat pointed out that any substantial differences between the old and new food and feed classification system would be considered and resolved by the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and, where necessary, by the Joint Meeting on Pesticide Residues. Such differences were expected to affect not more than about 10% of the food commodities or commodity groupings.

28. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction that progress had been made in the computerization of Codex MRLs and of the acceptance notifications received so far and expected in the future. It encouraged the Secretariat to continue its efforts in this direction with a view to eventually extending the computerization exercise to Codex Commodity Standards.

REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME FOR 1984/85 AND ON THE BUDGET OF THE PROGRAMME FOR 1986/87 (Agenda Item 5)

29. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 86/33/4, which was introduced by the Secretariat. Concerning the accounts for 1984/85, the Executive Committee noted that real expenditure in the biennium had amounted to \$2 939 000 as against a budgeted figure of \$2 968 000.

30. Regarding the budget for 1986/87, the Executive Committee noted that it had been maintained at a level corresponding in real terms to the budget for the preceding biennium. The pattern of the budget for 1986/87 was very similar to that of the budget for 1984/85. There had, however, been an increase in the provision for consultants to enable computer services to be made available and there had also been some increases in the provisions for meetings and duty travel, in order to cover respectively the costs of a session in 1986 of the Joint FAO/WHO Committee of Government Experts on the Code of Principles concerning Milk and Milk Products and the servicing of the newly established Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods, as well as intensified liaison with other international bodies.

31. The WHO Joint Secretary of the CAC informed the Executive Committee that WHO was, at present, facing rather serious financial constraints. There was a possibility of less resources being available to WHO than had been budgeted for 1986/87 and proposed for 1988/89, and this might affect Codex and Codex related work. He indicated that the extent of the financial shortfall was unknown at present and might not be known prior to the next session of the WHO Executive Board which would meet in January 1987. However, the WHO Joint Secretary confirmed that WHO was, and would continue to be, deeply interested and involved in the Codex Programme. The Programme was considered to be an important contribution to WHO's main social target - Health for All by the Year 2000. He indicated that WHO was, therefore, happy to collaborate with the Executive Committee in the discussions on the future direction of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. He stated that it would be prudent if the Executive Committee kept in mind the possibility of reduced WHO resources for supporting the work of the Commission. He added that it would be desirable, therefore, for the Executive Committee during the course of its deliberations on the future direction of the work of the

Commission, to assign priorities to individual activities, so that the Secretariat had appropriate guidance for the implementation of the Programme.

32. The Director of FAO's Food Policy and Nutrition Division, Dr. P. Lunvei stated that although all international agencies had been touched by financial problems, it appeared that FAO had, so far, not been touched by the same magnitude of financial problems as WHO. He indicated that the budget of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme for 1986/87, which had been approved by the FAO Conference in November 1985, would, at this point in time, remain as approved. He indicated that the Director-General of FAO attached very high importance to joint programmes with other UN agencies and that he had recently put forward the idea that the Codex Alimentarius Commission might direct its activities to deal with new subject areas affecting the international food trade. Dr. Lunven suggested that this matter be considered under the item of the agenda dealing with the future direction of the work of the Programme.

33. Dr. J. Acosta-Alemañy (Cuba) on behalf of the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, stated that it would be important to know how the financial crisis in WHO would affect the Codex Programme in concrete terms. Apropos of the Programme, he indicated that a study had been carried out in Cuba comparing various international bodies in the standardization field from the point of view of rational organization of activities and efficiency. The conclusion which had been reached in Cuba was that the Codex Alimentarius Commission was the best managed and most efficient, in terms of expenditure of funds and value for money, of the bodies studied.

34. The Representative of the Region of North America, Dr. N.W. Tape (Canada) agreed that it would be desirable for the Executive Committee and the Commission to determine their priorities as regards future work. He thought it important to know the extent of the reduction of the WHO contribution to the Programme.

35. The WHO Joint Secretary of the CAC indicated that he was not in a position to give any really concrete information at this stage concerning a reduction in WHO's contribution to the Programme. He thought that some programmes in WHO would be more severely affected than others. He indicated that the Director-General of WHO would be placing a proposed budget as well as a contingency budget before the WHO Executive Board at its January 1987 session.

36. Several members of the Executive Committee stressed the importance of ensuring that members of the Executive Board of WHO were well briefed on the importance of and benefits to be derived from Codex work. Several members also stressed the importance of Codex work for developing countries and wished to place on record an appeal to WHO not to reduce their contribution to the Programme.

37. In conclusion, the Executive Committee wished to place on record its appreciation of the statement made by the Director of the Food Policy and Nutrition Division of FAO indicating that the Director-General of FAO attached a high priority to the Codex Programme and also indicating FAO's position concerning financial support of the Programme. The Executive Committee regretted that the Director-General of WHO might feel it necessary to propose reductions in the WHO contribution to the Programme, but at the same time recognized the financial constraints placed upon him.

38. The Executive Committee considered that if it proved necessary for WHO to reduce its financial contribution to the Programme such reduction should be made known as soon as possible.

39. On the matter of fixing priorities, the Executive Committee wished to place on record that this was an ongoing activity monitored by the Commission.

40. Regarding Codex related activities, such as those concerning additives, pesticide residues and residues of veterinary drugs, the Executive Committee considered those activities to be of high priority and agreed that they should be maintained at their planned levels.

REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN TO AVOID OVERLAPPING OF WORK BETWEEN THE AFRICAN REGIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION (ARSO) AND THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 6)

41. The Executive Committee received a verbal report on action taken by the Secretariat in connection with the question of possible duplication of food standards work between the African Regional Organization for Standardization (ARSO) and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Executive Committee was informed that, as had been requested by the 16th Session of the Commission, the Secretary-General of ARSO had been informed about the recommendation of the Commission that ARSO should explore the possibility of not entering the food standards field (para. 82, ALINORM 85/47). The Secretariat had suggested to ARSO details of practical cooperation between that Organization and Codex. These included a recognition of the respective competences of ARSO and Codex, procedures for aligning ARSO and Codex Standards where differences existed and a mechanism for cooperation and information exchange.

42. The Executive Committee noted that ARSO, which was an African inter governmental organization with a membership of 23 countries (founded in 1977), worked in collaboration with national, regional and international organizations in various areas including food standardization. The fact that ARSO was responsible for the finalization of African Regional Standards and that these might not correspond entirely to existing Codex world-wide or African regional standards, was considered to represent a potential for duplication of work. Also governments in Africa would not wish to be presented with differing standards for the same products developed by separate international organizations.

43. The Representative of the Region of Africa, Mr. M.B. Mboundja (Cameroon) was of the opinion that ARSO standards would be based on Codex Standards and that, therefore, regional standardization should be seen as being complementary to and promoting the work of the Commission. Dr. L. Twum-Danso, (Ghana), Vice-Chairman, was of the opinion that where ARSO took over Codex standards, the ARSO standards should contain an appropriate acknowledgement of their Codex origin. He also thought that the question of possible duplication of work should be discussed by the Coordinating Committee for Africa.

44. The Coordinator designate for Asia, Dr. F.G. Winarno (Indonesia) stressed the need to avoid duplication of work and enquired as to what the Executive Committee's view would be if a similar situation were to arise in Asia. The Executive Committee agreed that it would consider any duplication of work between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and an Asian regional food standardization organization should this situation arise.

45. The Executive Committee stressed the need to make all efforts to avoid duplication of work and expressed the hope that the discussions between the Secretariats of ARSO and Codex would result in a positive and satisfactory solution before the next Session of the Commission.

PROGRESS REPORT ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOOD (Agenda Item 7)

46. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 86/33/5 to which was attached ALINORM 85/44, Part I, which had been put before the 16th Session of the Commission and which listed those countries which had indicated their positions concerning implementation of the Code. A further Circular Letter (CL) had been issued by the Secretariat on this topic in February 1986. Two further replies had been received (Benin and United Kingdom) and these were orally brought to the attention of the Committee.

47. Benin had indicated that legislation had been introduced which would facilitate implementation of the Code. The United Kingdom had indicated that while the basic principles of the Code were commendable, it would be difficult for the UK to adopt the Code without extensive amendment of its food legislation. Nonetheless the Code had been given the widest circulation in the food industry in the UK and it had been suggested that, wherever possible, the Code be applied to exports on a voluntary basis.

48. The Executive Committee took note of the above information and urged countries which had not yet responded concerning the Code to do so.

PROGRESS REPORT ON PREPARATION OF PAPER ON THE ROLE OF FOOD QUALITY AND STANDARDS IN FOOD SECURITY, TRADE AND HEALTH FOR FAO'S COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE (COAG)(Agenda Item 8)

49. The Executive Committee was informed that FAO's Committee on Agriculture (COAG), at its last session, had decided to place on the agenda of its next session, which would be held in March 1987, an item on its agenda on the role of food quality and standards in food security, trade and health. A consultant had been engaged to prepare this paper, which would deal with the importance of food standards and food control from an economic and health point of view and would provide an excellent opportunity to explain the benefits of Codex activities in regard to food security trade and health to an important audience. The paper would be accompanied by an audio-visual presentation. In response to a question from a member of the Executive Committee, the Secretariat indicated that the paper to be presented to COAG could be sent out to the Codex Contact Points after the COAG session, accompanied by the views expressed by COAG.

50. The Executive Committee strongly supported the preparation of this paper.

PROGRESS REPORT ON PREPARATION OF CASE STUDIES CONCERNING THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF CODEX WORK ON TRADE OF MEMBER COUNTRIES (Agenda Item 9)

51. The Executive Committee was informed by the Secretariat that case studies were in the course of preparation concerning the economic impact of Codex work on trade. The purpose of the exercise was to try and quantify in facts and figures the economic benefits of Codex work. Initially, two member countries, one a developing and the other a developed country, and both very active in Codex work, had been selected to carry out case studies. The selected member countries were Brazil and the USA. The Secretariat gave a broad outline of the sort of criteria the case studies would concern themselves with and also an indication of where some of the data were expected to be collected from.

52. The Coordinator designate for Asia, Dr. F.G. Winarno (Indonesia), stated that he would like to see a country in the Region of Asia included in a case study of this kind. The Secretariat indicated that the Brazilian and US case studies would be pilot studies. Later, it might be possible to provide for a case study to be carried out in one or two more countries, but before doing so it would be desirable to have a look at the methodology employed in the current case studies.

53. The Executive Committee looked forward to being informed about the outcome of the two case studies at its next session.

INFORMATION CONCERNING THE REQUEST OF THE WHO EXECUTIVE BOARD TO RECEIVE A REPORT AT ITS 79TH SESSION (JANUARY 1987) ON THE WORK AND IMPACT OF THE CAC (Agenda Item 10)

54. The Executive Committee was informed that a member of the Executive Board of WHO had requested the Director-General of WHO to prepare a report on the work of the CAC for review by the Executive Board at its 79th Session in January 1987. This report was at present being prepared by the WHO Secretariat and would cover the following topics:

- historical account of the establishment of the Programme;
- objectives and working procedures of the CAC;
- membership of CAC;
- texts developed by the CAC;
- acceptance of Codex standards and MRLs;
- health protection aspects of the work of the CAC;
- the CAC and the promotion of primary health care;
- further benefits to be derived from the work of the CAC;
- future direction of the work of the CAC.

55. Dr. J. Acosta-Alemañy (Cuba) on behalf of the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, indicated that any presentation made to the Executive Board of WHO should include a reference to the importance which developing countries attach to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. The Executive Committee was very pleased to learn that the WHO Executive Board was going to be informed about the work of the CAC, since it was felt that health agencies in general appear to lack knowledge about the health and economic benefits to be derived from the work of the CAC. The Executive Committee considered, therefore, that, if at all possible, the paper to be prepared for the Executive Board should also be brought to the attention of the World Health Assembly. The Executive Committee also thought that the forthcoming discussion in the WHO Executive Board should, if possible, be attended by the Chairman of the CAC.

PROGRESS REPORT ON PREPARATION OF INFORMATION BOOKLET ON CODEX WORK (Agenda Item 11)

56. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee about the progress made in the preparation of an information booklet on Codex work. The booklet, which was being prepared by a consultant, was intended to explain the importance of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in a manner which would be readily understood by all. The booklet would aim at an eye-catching presentation and would include illustrations and diagrams. The booklet would describe the nature, aims and extent of the Codex operation and the benefits to be derived from participation in Codex work. The booklet which would be directed to a wide audience, would be a response to a need, expressed by many members of the CAC, for the diffusion of more information about the value of Codex work.

57. The Representative of the Region of Asia, Dr. Baik Duck Woo (Republic of Korea) stressed the need for such an information booklet and for expediting its publication. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) and the Representative of the Region of North America, Dr. N.W. Tape (Canada) expressed the opinion that the relationship of Codex with other organizations, such as for example, GATT, might usefully be referred to in the booklet. The need for the availability of the information booklet in more than the languages of the Commission (English, French and Spanish) was also mentioned. The Representative of the Region of the South West Pacific, Mr. B. Schick (Australia) stressed the need for ensuring no duplication of effort with other papers under preparation by the Secretariat aimed at demonstrating the importance of Codex work. Some members of the Executive Committee inquired about the extent of the planned distribution of the information booklet and whether an audio-visual presentation of the information contained in the booklet was envisaged.

58. In answer to the above remarks, the Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that the booklet would be published in English, French and Spanish and that it was hoped to have it available at the end of 1986 or early in 1987. Concerning the matter of having the booklet translated into other languages, the Secretariat was requested to explore this matter. The Secretariat indicated that it was intended to give it the widest possible distribution.

59. The Secretariat assured the Executive Committee that the paper for FAO's Committee on Agriculture (COAG) and the information booklet, which were intended for different audiences, would be consistent with each other. Further, the Secretariat would examine whether the audio visual material to be presented to COAG, along with texts in the Codex information booklet, could subsequently be adapted for use and presentations to other audiences.

REPORT ON POSTPONEMENT OF THE 14TH SESSION OF THE CODEX COMMITTEE ON PROCESSED MEAT AND POULTRY PRODUCTS TO THE NEXT BIENNIUM (Agenda Item 12)

60. The Executive Committee noted that the 14th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Meat and Poultry Products (CCPMPP), which had been scheduled to be held during September 1986, had been postponed to 1988 for reasons outlined in CL 1986/16-PMPP, communicated to all Codex Contact Points and interested international organizations in January 1986.

61. The Executive Committee agreed with the view that the 14th Session of the CCPMPP, if held in September 1986, as per schedule, would not be fully productive,

since that Committee would not, as had been explained in CL 1986/16, be in a position to discuss further the Guidelines for the use of Vegetable Protein Products and Milk Protein Products in Processed Meat and Poultry Products, with a view to their finalization. The Executive Committee, therefore, endorsed postponement of the session to 1988.

ACTION TAKEN REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF GUIDELINES FOR THE PREVENTION OF TRANSMISSION OF ANIMAL DISEASES THROUGH MEAT PRODUCTS (Agenda Item 13)

62. The Executive Committee noted that the above subject had been raised at the Codex Committee on Processed Meat and Poultry Products (CCPMPP) at its 13th Session when discussing its future work programme. The Observer from the International Commission for Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF) at that session had pointed out that processes applied to meat products from healthy animals from areas where infectious animal diseases of economic importance were prevalent varied according to national regulations of exporting and importing countries, creating certain trade barriers. In view of its expertise in relation to processing technology of meat» it had been suggested that the CCPMPP should consider the possibility of developing Guidelines for the Prevention of Transmission of Animal Diseases through Meat Products in International Trade.

63. The subject had been discussed briefly at the 32nd Session of this Committee and in more detail at the 16th Session of the Commission (ALINORM 85/47). The Executive Committee noted that there was considerable support among delegations at the Commission for the development of such Guidelines and offers of technical cooperation in any work which might be undertaken. The Commission had agreed that the Secretariat should discuss this matter with the Animal Production and Health Division of FAO and, as a result» a meeting had been held with experts from the Animal Health Service and the Meat and Dairy Service to consider whether Guidelines were necessary and if so how to proceed with their elaboration.

64. Dr. Y. Ozawa, Chief of the Animal Health Service informed the Executive Committee that the meeting had considered that the elaboration of Guidelines for the Prevention of the Transmission of Animal Diseases through Meat Products in International Trade was essential to avoid unnecessary trade barriers with regard to infectious animal diseases of economic importance.

65. He stated that, in view of the postponement of the 14th Session of the CCPMPP, the Animal Production and Health Division would probably be disposed to make provision to deal with the subject during the next biennium 1988-89 by convening an Expert Consultation.

66. The Expert Consultation would review the broad field of the transmission and prevention of animal diseases and would give priority to the development of Guidelines for the prevention of transmission of three common animal diseases, Foot-and-Mouth Disease, African Swine Fever and Newcastle Disease through appropriate treatment of meat products from healthy animals raised in areas where these diseases were prevalent. After gaining some experience in developing and applying Guidelines for these diseases, work might be extended to others such as Hog Cholera, Rinderpest and Trichinosis. The first stage of the work of the elaboration of the guidelines could be undertaken by the Animal Production and Health Division and later introduced into the Codex System to seek intergovernmental opinion and agreement.

67. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) requested that not only problems relating to meat but also problems relating to milk and milk products be taken into consideration.

68. The Executive Committee noted that the Animal Production and Health Division of FAO (AGA) and the Codex had earlier cooperated very successfully in the preparation of the Code on Ante-mortem and Post-mortem Judgement of Slaughter Animals and Meat along similar lines.

69. The CCPMPP and the Codex Secretariat could assist in identifying experts in the processing technology of meat and it was agreed that the participation of the Chairman and Secretariat of the CCPMPP would be most desirable.

70. The Executive Committee was informed that no other international organization was dealing with the treatment of meat products entering disease-free zones, so that there was no question of duplication of effort.

71. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the progress made in this important matter.

REPORT ON ACTION TAKEN BY WHO TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBER STATES IN SESSIONS OF THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 14)

72. The WHO Joint Secretary of the CAC recalled the unique role which Coordinating Committees can play in discussing the health and economic consequences of food contamination and in discussing the need to consider food safety as an integral part of the primary health care delivery system and the total food system. This had been emphasized in sessions of the CAC and its Executive Committee time and again. One of the prerequisites to use successfully the Coordinating Committees in this promotional campaign was extensive representation by Member States in sessions of these Committees. The question of what WHO could further do to increase attendance of Member States at sessions of Coordinating Committees had recently been discussed at the 2nd meeting of WHO staff (Headquarters (HQ) and Regional Offices (RO)) involved in the Food Safety Programme (Alexandria, Egypt, 3-7 Nov. 1985). This meeting had agreed that WHO, in the past, had not taken full advantage of the possibilities presented by the sessions of the Coordinating Committees which offered particularly good opportunities to explore and ascertain the needs of Member States in the food area and to increase WHO support to them. It had also been agreed that the Codex Coordinating Committees should be a basic mechanism for the development of technical cooperation activities in food safety. WHO regional food safety officers would, more than in the past, encourage their Member States to actively participate in the work of the Coordinating Committees. In order to better prepare the recently held sessions of the Coordinating Committees for Asia and Europe, WHO regional and HQ food safety officers had met in February 1986 with staff of the Joint Office in Rome. The Coordinating Committee for Asia (Yogyakarta, 8-14 April, 1986) had, for the first time been attended, not only by HQ staff, but by WHO staff from the three ROs (the Regional Offices) concerned (EMRO, SEARO, WFRO). The recently held session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe had also been attended by both WHO HQ and RO staff.

73. Continuing, the WHO Joint Secretary of the CAC stated that the model successfully adopted by PAHO of coordinating the timing and venue of workshops with sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean would be studied also by the other WHO Regional Offices, so that in future, through increased

WHO participation in the work of these Committees, the participation of Member States might also be enhanced.

74. In the ensuing discussion the Executive Committee expressed its appreciation of the efforts of WHO to help increase the participation of Member States in the work of the CAC, particularly in its Coordinating Committees. The Executive Committee also expressed appreciation at the fact that the Regional Offices of WHO had now accepted responsibility for rendering secretarial services to and cooperating with the Coordinating Committees and expressed the hope that this would be considered by the Regional Offices of WHO as a priority.

REPORTS BY THE CODEX COORDINATORS (Agenda Item 15)

Coordinating Committee for Asia

75. The Coordinator designate for Asia, Dr. F. Winarno (Indonesia) reported on the outcome of the 5th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia, held in Yogyakarta, from 8 to 14 April 1986. He stated that he was pleased with the attendance at the session of representatives from all the WHO Regional Offices in the Codex region of Asia and wondered whether this would continue in the future, especially in view of the possible budgetary cuts in WHO. The Coordinator designate for Asia was, however, assured that the attendance of WHO officers from the WHO Regional Offices at sessions of the CC Asia was a matter for the WHO Regional Directors, who would take into account the wishes of the countries of the region. Further, any cut in the Codex budget would not necessarily affect attendance by WHO Regional Officers.

76. It was noted that the subject of attendance of countries in the Middle East at sessions of the CC Asia would be considered under Agenda Item 20.

Coordinating Committee for Europe

77. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier, (Switzerland) reported on the 15th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCE) (Thun, Switzerland, 16 to 20 June 1986).

Terms of Reference

78. The Coordinator indicated that the terms of reference of the CC Europe did not include, as in the case of other Coordinating Committees, a clause (d) which reads: "develop regional standards for food products moving exclusively or almost exclusively in intra-regional trade", since this was considered by the Coordinating Committee to be too restrictive to allow the development of European Regional standards; the CC Europe had, therefore, decided to await the Commission's decision on the interpretation of Rule VI.3 before including a clause suitable to the requirements of the European Region.

79. The Executive Committee noted that as a result of the interpretation of Rule VI.3 given by Legal Counsel at the 16th Session of the Commission (see ALINORM 85/19 paras. 16 to 18), the Coordinating Committee had now decided to request the Commission to allow its terms of reference to be amended to include a clause (d) which would read as follows: "develop regional standards for food products of particular interest for intra-regional trade".

Rule VI.3

80. The Coordinator for Europe also informed the Executive Committee that some delegations had expressed concern regarding the possible consequences of the interpretation of Rule VI.3 as given by the representative of the Legal Counsel of FAO at

the 16th Session of the Commission. The CC Europe had requested the Coordinator to seek the Executive Committee's approval to place an item on Rule VI.3 on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the Committee on General Principles (24-28. November 1986, Paris).

81. The Executive Committee recalled that the Commission had decided, at its 16th Session, that the interpretation given to Rule VI.3 by the representative of the Legal Counsel of FAO should be accepted and further, had decided that the matter was now closed. In the absence of any further new elements, the Executive Committee did not think it appropriate to refer this matter to the Codex Committee on General Principles. The matter could, of course, be raised at the 17th Session of the Commission. Extension of Term of Office of the Coordinator

82. The Executive Committee had before it CRD 2 which was an extract from the report of the CC Europe (ALINORM 87/19, paras. 187-194) dealing with the nomination of the Coordinator.

83. The CC Europe had noted that the present Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland), had been re-elected to a second term by the Commission to serve as Coordinator for Europe from the end of the 16th to the end of the 17th Session of the Commission. The CC Europe had learnt that the Government of Switzerland would be prepared to continue hosting the Coordinating Committee for Europe, if the term of the Coordinator could be extended up to the end of the 18th Session of the Commission.

84. It had been pointed out that under the Rules of Procedure of the Commission one term could be constituted by the three periods up to the third succeeding regular session of the Commission. The CC Europe had unanimously agreed to the extension of Mr. Rossier's second term of office and had requested the Commission to reconsider its decision taken at the 16th Session and to extend Mr. Rossier's term of office until the end of the 18th Session of the Commission. It had been recognized by the CC Europe that such a decision would require the advice of FAO Legal Counsel. Should this solution not be possible, the CC Europe had agreed that Professor H. Woidich of Austria should be proposed for nomination as Coordinator to serve for the same period of time.

85. The delegation of Austria at the CC Europe session had stated that the Austrian Government was prepared to host the next session of the Coordinating Committee.

86. Concerning the extension of the period of office of the Coordinator, the Executive Committee agreed that the legal advisers should provide a recommendation on this matter for consideration by the Commission at its next session.

Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) -Preparations for the 1987 Session (Agenda Item 15)

87. Dr. J. Acosta-Alemañy, representing the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Minister Ramón Darías Rodes, informed the Executive Committee of the activities of the Cuban Secretariat of the CCLAC in preparation for the 5th Session of the Committee which would be held in Havana, 11-16 February 1987. The Executive Committee noted that the Session would be preceded, as for the 3rd and 4th Sessions of the CCLAC in Havana, by a seminar on Food Standardization and Food Safety, organized in collaboration and with the financial assistance of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) for 15 fellowships. It was expected that those attending the Seminar would also attend the 5th Session of the CCLAC and thus increase the overall participation in the activities of the Committee and the Region.

88. The Executive Committee was also informed that, for the first time, a country hosting a Codex Commodity Committee had agreed to transfer a session to a developing country and that arrangements were well in hand with the Government of Canada to hold the 4th Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins (CCVP) in Havana from 2 to 6 February 1987. Dr. Acosta- Alemañy stated that he hoped that this initiative would also be of benefit to the attendance at all three meetings in Havana (CCVP; PAHO seminar; CCLAC).

89. The Executive Committee was further informed by Dr. Acosta-Alemañy that the Coordinator also intended to visit 15 to 20 countries in the region to encourage attendance at the meetings and to inform governments of Codex activities.

90. Dr. Acosta- Alemañy expressed appreciation to the Government of Canada for the spirit of collaboration shown by its offer to transfer the 4th Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins to Havana and hoped that such a relocation would reduce travel costs for some developing countries wishing to attend the meeting.

91. The Executive Committee noted that the matters for action arising from the last Session were being actively pursued and expressed satisfaction with the dynamic approach of the Coordinator and the Cuban secretariat in furthering Codex work in the region.

Coordinating Committee for Africa

92. In the absence of the Coordinator for Africa, the Secretariat outlined developments concerning the 8th Session of the Coordinating Committee for Africa. The Representative of the Region of Africa stressed the importance of ensuring that the 8th Session of the Coordinating Committee would be held in the 1986/87 biennium. The Secretariat indicated that this was its aim.

RECENT DEVELOPMENT CONCERNING MYCOTOXINS (Agenda Item 16)

93. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 86/33/7, prepared by the Secretariat, which contained a summary of recent developments within FAO and WHO concerning mycotoxins. In addition to the information in the paper, the Committee was informed that the UNEP had agreed to support the Second FAO/WHO Conference on Mycotoxins, and that the Conference would be held in Harare, Zimbabwe in early April 1987. It was also reported that JECFA would evaluate the aflatoxin group (B₁, B₂, G₁, G₂, M₁ and M₂) at its 31st meeting in February 1987.

94. The Executive Committee especially noted the request of the FAO Intergovernmental Group on Oilseeds, Oils and Fats that the Commission urgently consider establishing internationally agreed limits for aflatoxin contamination which would be uniform and reasonable, together with recognized methods of analysis and sampling, and guidelines for the reduction of contamination either at the production level or by detoxification.

95. The Coordinator for Europe recommended that any such limits as might be elaborated by the Commission be based on the advice of JECFA in regard to their toxicological evaluation.

96. The Executive Committee recommended that the Commission should respond positively to the Intergovernmental Groups' urgent request, and that the question of mycotoxins other than aflatoxins be taken up as the need arises.

97. The Executive Committee was also aware of the work being undertaken by the Codex Committee on Food Additives and recommended that that Committee give

consideration to the mechanism and procedures, including arrangements for the provision of expert advice which would be appropriate in order to respond to the request of the Intergovernmental Group mentioned above. The Executive Committee requested the CCFA to submit its recommendations on this topic to the next session of the CAC.

98. The Coordinator designate for Asia made special reference to the Mycotoxin Training Centre which was being established under a joint ASEAN/EEC programme which would provide essential technical support to developing countries in South-East Asia in their efforts to control food contamination by mycotoxins.

REPORTS ON MAIN DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING CODEX SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 17)

99. The Executive Committee received reports by the Secretariat on the main issues and developments arising from Codex Committee sessions held since the Sixteenth Session of the Commission. The views expressed by the Executive Committee are set out hereunder.

(i) Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH)

100. The Secretariat reported main features and the future work programme of the 21st Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene.

(ii) Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

101. The Coordinator designate for Asia expressed the view that while average daily intakes of Monosodium glutamate might be well below the ADI there could be some potential risk groups among populations in South East Asia whose intakes of the additive could far exceed the ADI. The Executive Committee suggested that the CCFA keep this in mind when developing simple guidelines for evaluation of intake of MSG. As regards the work of the CCFA on aflatoxins, the Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) expressed the view that the CCFA should make every effort to avoid duplication of effort with other organizations.

(iii) Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (CCPFV)

102. The Representative of the Region of Africa, Mr. M.B. Mboundja (Cameroon) was of the opinion that the amendment of the Codex Standard for Pineapple by the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables regarding the provision for core material, should be examined further, since this was an important matter affecting producers of canned pineapple other than Thailand, the country which had proposed the amendment of the Codex Standard for Pineapple. The Representative of the Region of Africa was informed that technical comments on this matter could be sent to the Secretariat to put before the next session of the Commission.

103. The Executive Committee noted that the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables had completed its work and agreed with the Committee's decision that it should adjourn sine die.

(iv) Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL)

104. The Executive Committee was informed of the proceedings of the 5th Session of CC/CPL and expressed its appreciation for the work carried out by that Committee, and especially the progress made on the draft standards for sorghum grains and sorghum flours which had been converted from draft African Regional Standards into draft standards of worldwide application.

105. The Representative of the Region of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ing. J. Piazzi (Argentina) expressed his satisfaction with the revised draft standards which took into account parameters specific to the ecological conditions in his Region. He was of the opinion that, in general, standardization of raw materials presented problems because the compositional aspects of such products were not uniform and were subject to natural variations and, therefore, the Commission should concentrate its efforts on the standardization of processed and semi-processed products.

106. Dr. Twum-Danso, Vice-Chairman, pointed out that, while recognizing the difficulties inherent in the standardization of unprocessed products, countries needed international standards for primary products.

107. The Executive Committee agreed that, in view of the extensive programme of work on staple foods, the CC/CPL would need at least two to three more sessions to complete its work.

(v) Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues

108. The Representative of the Region of Latin America and the Caribbean, Ing. J. Piazzi (Argentina) supported by the Coordinator designate for Asia, Dr. F. Winarno (Indonesia) expressed their satisfaction with the work of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues and the effectiveness of Working Group III, which had produced a number of useful recommendations. In their opinion, however, there was a need to intensify work in the area of pesticide residues in the various Codex regions, through holding seminars or workshops and through intensification of technical assistance by the interested International Organizations. Furthermore, the problems facing developing countries as regards pesticide residues needed to be identified more positively.

109. In reply to questions from some members of the Executive Committee the Secretariat explained that it was through technical assistance, such as projects and similar arrangements by FAO and other organizations that the generation of appropriate residues data from developing countries could be achieved. The Codex Guidelines in this respect only set out the type of data which needed to be developed for setting Codex MRLs. Work on "simplified" methods of residue analysis was being intensified and a number of references to such methods had been included in Codex publications on pesticide residues. Concerning the question of the use of pesticide containers as food containers, the Executive Committee was informed that, according to FAO guidelines, containers used for pesticides should be destroyed or otherwise disposed of and that such containers were not considered to be suitable for storing food.

110. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland) was of the opinion that alternative ways of pest control should be investigated and that the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues should bear this in mind in its work in establishing maximum residue limits. The Coordinator referred to methods of biological pest control and other such measures. In reply, the Secretariat referred to the work of the FAO Plant Production and Protection Division in controlling plant pests through appropriate pesticide registration procedures and through technical advice and information on various types of pest control measures, including integrated pest management. Considerable information was available from FAO and other bodies in this area. The concern of Codex related to the presence of pesticide residues in food as a potential trade barrier and possible health risk. The Executive Committee took note of the information provided by the Secretariat and encouraged the use of any suitable alternative pest control measures which would lead to a reduction of pesticide residues in food.

(vi) Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP)

Inclusion of Sardine Sardinella in the Codex Standard for Sardines and Sardine-Type Products

111. The Coordinator designate for Asia, Dr. F. Winarno (Indonesia) enquired whether the CCFFP had given further consideration to the inclusion of Sardine Sardinella in the above Standard. The Executive Committee noted that the matter had been discussed (ALINORM 87/18, para. 251) and that enquiries had shown that such a species description could not be found in any reference work on taxonomy. Furthermore, since no supporting evidence had been received on this point, the CCFFP had decided not to pursue its inclusion in the "Canned Sardines" Standard.

(vii) Joint UNECE/Codex Alimentarius Group of Experts on Standardization of Fruit Juices

112. The Secretariat pointed out the main features and the future work programme of the 17th Session of the Joint UNECE/Codex Alimentarius Group of Experts on Standardization of Fruit Juices (Rome, 26-30 May 1986).

(viii) Joint FAO/WHO Committee of Government Experts on the Code of Principles concerning Milk and Milk Products

113. The Secretariat pointed out the main features and the future work programme of the 21st Session of the Joint FAO/WHO Committee of Government Experts on the Code of Principles concerning Milk and Milk Products (Rome, 2-6 June 1986).

(ix) Codex Committee on General Principles

114. The Executive Committee was informed that arrangements had now been completed for the holding of the 8th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles in Paris from 24 to 28 November 1986. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee of the topics to be discussed at the session.

115. Dr. J. Acosta- Alemañy (Cuba), on behalf of the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean and the Representative of the Region of Africa, Mr. M.B. Mboundja (Cameroon) indicated that some countries in their regions had not received the circular letters (CLs) which had been issued by the Secretariat seeking comments on various matters to be discussed at the forthcoming session of the Codex Committee on General Principles. The Secretariat indicated that it would re-issue the CLs in question.

General

116. The Executive Committee noted with satisfaction the reports on the above-mentioned sessions of the Codex Subsidiary bodies towards realizing the objectives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

DEVELOPMENTS CONCERNING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FOR INCREASED PARTICIPATION BY DEVELOPING COUNTRIES IN CODEX SESSIONS (Agenda Item 18)

117. The Secretariat informed the Committee of action taken in an attempt to secure financial assistance for developing countries to attend selected Codex committees, especially Coordinating Committees, through a UNDP TCDC- type project. A circular letter (CL 1985/52) had been distributed in September 1985 advising governments of the possible availability of UNDP funds to cover travel to Codex sessions.

118. A number of members of the Executive Committee informed the Committee of unsuccessful attempts to obtain financial assistance for travel through the above mentioned project (INT/83/904). The Representative of the Region of Africa, Mr. M.B. Mboundja (Cameroon) suggested that it might be useful to specify the type of participant who might qualify for UNDP assistance to attend certain Codex sessions.

119. The Executive Committee discussed other possible sources of financial assistance and other means for facilitating attendance at Codex sessions by developing countries. In this respect PAHO sponsored seminars held in conjunction with the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean were held up as an example. It was suggested that it might be useful if UNDP and bilateral aid agencies could be represented at Codex sessions, in order to promote greater awareness in these bodies of the nature of Codex work and of the interest governments of developing countries had in these activities.

120. The Executive Committee noted that the Rules of Procedure of the Commission specifically excluded travel assistance from Codex funds to enable participation of delegates at Codex sessions. It also noted that, so far, there was no indication of any developing country having been successful in obtaining UNDP funds to attend a Codex session.

121. The Executive Committee expressed its appreciation to the Secretariat for its efforts in having tried to find a solution to a difficult problem. The Executive Committee requested the Secretariat to explore the possibility of providing assistance for developing countries in respect of attendance at certain Codex meetings through the holding of seminars or workshops sponsored by FAO, WHO or other bodies alongside Codex sessions. To this end, the Coordinators for the Regions of Africa, Asia and Latin America and the Caribbean should also undertake initiatives in conveying the wishes of their member countries to the responsible officers of FAO and WHO Regional offices.

ISLAMIC REQUIREMENTS FOR FOOD OF ANIMAL ORIGIN (Agenda Item 19)

122. In introducing document CX/EXEC 86/33/8, the Executive Committee was informed that a meeting on Islamic rules governing foods of animal origin had been held from 5 to 7 December 1985 in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, and that this meeting had been jointly sponsored by the League of Muslim World and WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office. The full report of the meeting had been issued by the Eastern Mediterranean Regional Office of WHO, Alexandria, Egypt, and had been made available to the Executive Committee.

123. The meeting had prepared a list of animals the meat of which was permitted for consumption under Islamic law. The essentials of Islamic methods of slaughter were also defined and discussion had been devoted to the question of stunning before slaughter. The captive bolt and carbon dioxide methods of stunning had been rejected as unacceptable. The electric method was considered less objectionable and the meeting had appointed a committee of four members (two Islamic scholars, a medical and a veterinary scientist) to study the humane aspects of electric stunning and to report to the organizers of the meeting. It was expected that this committee would meet from 30 June to 3 July 1986.

124. The Representative of the South West Pacific Region, Mr. B. Schick (Australia) informed the Executive Committee that for meat-exporting countries the Islamic rules governing food of animal origin would be of considerable economic importance. He therefore wondered if there was scope for the CAC to elaborate a Codex code of

practice for the preparation and labelling of food according to Islamic requirements. The Secretariat pointed out that there had already been a document on Islamic labelling requirements prepared by Malaysia which had been discussed at the Second Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia. The Executive Committee noted the above proposal and requested the Secretariat to look into this matter. It also requested to be kept informed of developments in this field.

MATTERS ARISING FROM CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 20)

125. The Executive Committee had before it document CX/EXEC 86/33/9 containing relevant extracts of the reports of (i) 18th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives on the subject of specifications of identity and purity of food additives, (ii) 5th Session of the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes on the subject of ISO specifications for rice, and (iii) 5th Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia on the subject of attendance by member countries in the Middle East at sessions of the Coordinating Committee.

Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA)

126. The CCFA at its 18th Session had recommended that the Codex Advisory Specifications be published separately, preferably in loose-leaf form, and that the matter be referred to the Executive Committee and the Commission for further guidance. The following reasons had been cited by the CCFA in support of its request:

- (i) there is no single summary document concerning those JECFA specifications endorsed by the Commission as Codex Advisory Specifications;
- (ii) some Codex Advisory Specifications are editorial corrections of JECFA specifications and the editorial corrections are not published in Codex documents;
- (iii) Codex Advisory Specifications for some substances have been revised and there may be confusion due to several references in Commission documents to endorsements of different specifications for the same substance;
- (iv) governments could more easily reference Codex Advisory Specifications if they were in a single publication.

127. In view of the fact that a new Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme had only recently been appointed and that he wished to review the implications of this matter, more especially in the light of a possible reduction in the WHO contribution to the budget of the Programme, the Executive Committee agreed to defer consideration of this topic to its next session when it expected to see secretariat proposals on the matter.

Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL)

Standardization of Milled Rice (paras 156-160 of ALINORM 87/29)

128. The Secretariat informed the Executive Committee that, at the 5th Session of the CC/CPL, concern had been expressed on the rather slow progress in the development of an ISO Specification for rice, including milled rice, which would have to be examined by governments before a decision could be taken on the need for a Codex Standard for Milled Rice.

129. The CC/CPL had recalled that, at its 30th Session, it had recommended to the Commission a detailed procedure for the examination of the ISO Specification that took into account the wishes of the Coordinating Committee for Asia. The Coordinating Committee had been particularly concerned that the CC/CPL might develop a standard which differed from the ISO Specification.

130. The Executive Committee noted that the CC/CPL had been informed by the observer of ISO that ISO/TC 34/SC 4 expected to finalize the Specification for Rice at the forthcoming session of ISO/TC 34/SC 4 for registration as a Draft International Standard which would be made available to the Codex Secretariat.

131. The Executive Committee confirmed the procedure approved by the Commission (paras 438-440 of ALINORM 83/43), in view of the concern which had been expressed by the Coordinating Committee for Asia, but urged ISO to expedite the finalization of the Specification for Rice.

Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia (CC Asia)

132. At the 5th Session of the CC Asia, the Representative of the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean drew attention to the scant attendance of countries in the Middle East (Western Asia) at sessions of the Coordinating Committee for Asia. The Committee agreed that this matter be brought to the attention of the Executive Committee and the Commission in order to seek advice on ways to increase participation of Western Asian countries in Codex work carried out at the regional level.

133. The Executive Committee considered the following suggestions made by some of its members as a solution to the problem raised.

- (i) Convening a Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia in the Middle East at the earliest possible opportunity

134. Since the Indonesia authorities had already kindly offered to host the next (6th) Session of the CC Asia in Indonesia in 1988, action could be initiated to arrange for the hosting of the 7th Session of the CC Asia in 1990 by a country in the Middle East. This might result in increased participation of countries from the Middle East in sessions of CC Asia, and a recognition of the benefits resulting from such a participation by those countries. It was, however, pointed out that the holding of sessions in the Middle East might adversely affect the attendance of countries from South East Asia and the Pacific, because of the increased travel costs involved.

- (ii) Establishment of a separate Codex Coordinating Committee for countries in the Middle East and possibly North African Litoral

135. Because of significant differences in the interests related to Codex as well as cultural differences that exist between the countries in the Middle East and in South East Asia and the Pacific, the possibility of establishing a separate coordinating committee as mentioned above was suggested, but not pursued at the present time.

136. The Executive Committee took note of the lack of participation of the Western Asian countries in the Middle East in sessions of the CC Asia and asked the Secretariat to explore ways and means to improve the situation. Inclusion of items that would be of particular interest to the Middle Eastern countries in the agenda and closer contacts with the Arab Organization for Standardization and Metrology (ASMO) were suggested. The Executive Committee agreed to discuss the subject further at its next session.

FUTURE DIRECTION OF THE WORK OF THE JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME (Agenda Item 21)

137. The Executive Committee had before it a document on the subject (CX/EXEC 86/33/CRD 1) which had been prepared by a consultant (Mr. G.O. Kermode).

138. In introducing the document, the WHO Joint Secretary of the CAC reminded the Executive Committee that the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme would soon reach a very important milestone - the completion of most of the food commodity standardization work. It was, therefore, timely to discuss what direction the Programme should take, when the above task had been accomplished. He also informed the Committee that WHO was in the process of formulating its Eighth General Programme of Work for 1990-95. In this context it was also important to know in which direction the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme would go, particularly if it would continue to significantly contribute to WHO's main social target -Health for All by the Year 2000.

139. The document reviewed the current state of the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies and indicated the changed situation likely to be facing the Commission by the end of 1989, when most of the activity on the elaboration of standards by the Codex Commodity Committees would probably have been completed. The document considered food groups not previously standardized under the Programme and other matters which might be given attention by the CAC, in order to fill lacunae in the Codex Alimentarius.

140. The Chief of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme referred to the recent statement of the Director-General of FAO concerning the contamination of food by radio active fall out. He indicated that the Director-General had referred to the fact that the Codex Alimentarius Commission had not extended its activities to such contamination, but had felt that the time had come to think about it. The Director-General had indicated that FAO intended to discuss the issue with WHO and IAEA, in order to decide what should be done. The Chief of the Programme further indicated that he envisaged the setting up of an expert consultation jointly with WHO and IAEA to provide technical advice and guidance on how to proceed.

141. In the general discussion that followed, the following points were made by individual Members of the Executive Committee:

- additional efforts should be made to increase Codex visibility and general knowledge of its role and impact. A recent National Conference on Food Quality Control in Costa Rica had shown that there was a lack of knowledge of Codex work in many sectors. The forthcoming publication of information and audio-visual material on Codex was very useful, but its value was diminished in countries where there were frequent changes in personnel working in the Codex field. Continuous education was, therefore, necessary and might be achieved by a "Codex Task Force" of experts to inform countries by personal contact on the value of Codex work and how to form effective national Codex Committees.
- There might be some uncertainty in some countries on how Codex Standards would affect national legislation and consequently some hesitance in taking an active part in Codex work.

- There was a need to investigate the problems of contamination by mycotoxins of internationally traded foods. To deal with these and with environmental contaminants a special Codex Committee on Contaminants might be required.
- The establishment of a Codex Committee on Tropical Fruits and Vegetables appeared to be a possibility at the next session of the Commission.
- The establishment of an "Omnibus" Commodity Committee which would deal with outstanding items from Committees which had wound up their main work programme and with any matters which would not justify the convening of a full Commodity Committee session should be considered.
- The proposal by the Consultant to undertake work on the standardization of alcoholic beverages should be considered in view of the enormous international trade in such products and the necessity to protect the consumer from abusive practices.
- Future work should also take into account the GATT activities in Food and Agriculture and the desire of consumers to have wholesome food at reasonable prices.
 - i) Recent North American National Conferences on Codex had stressed:
 - ii) the importance of maintaining a high priority for the work of the Codex General Subject Committees and of placing more importance on the work of Regional Coordinating Committees;
 - iii) more emphasis on acceptance and implementation of Codex Standards;
 - iv) the need to better inform governments» international organizations, UN agencies, the food industry and consumers on the role and impact of Codex activities;
 - v) the need for greater efforts to avoid duplication of work on food standards.
- Increasing "visibility" of Codex could stimulate more demand for work in certain areas, such as Food Additives and Environmental Contaminants.
- Separate Committees might be considered for Methods of Analysis and for Sampling.
- Arrangements for the Executive Committee to meet elsewhere than in Geneva or Rome would facilitate Executive Committee Members to meet with senior government and industry officers and explain the work and impact of Codex activities.
- Coordinating Committees could do more to disseminate information on Codex work. Personal contacts in countries of the region should be made to ensure the establishment of an international network of Codex National Committees and the future work of the Secretariat should be geared to the provision of the necessary information services.

- The hygienic aspects of the handling of street vended foods should be covered by the elaboration of a Codex Code of Practice.
- The Consultant's paper did not cover necessary changes to rationalize the working mechanism of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. Such changes in the short, medium and long term could not be dissociated from the direction of the future work of the Commission and could result in worthwhile economies in expenditure and increased efficiency.
- As a matter of strategy there should be an evaluation mechanism to examine how developing countries can be helped to accept Codex standards. The need to provide training in food control, including laboratory facilities was also mentioned.
- The possibility of standardization of key primary products should be looked into.
- In addition to work on alcoholic beverages, consideration might also be given to work on tea and coffee.
- There was some concern expressed about the slowness of the Steps system in regard to the development of MRLs for pesticides.
- Rapid urbanization in many parts of the world and the consequent increase in the trading of processed foods and the necessity for more extensive food control would increase the demand for Codex recommendations. Codex should investigate the feasibility of publishing periodically a bulletin on its activities with a widespread circulation in order to reach and influence administrators, policy makers and technical personnel.

142. The Executive Committee agreed as follows:

- i) The future work programme should be given high priority for further discussion at the Codex Committee on General Principles and at the next Session of the Executive Committee and the Commission.
- ii) There was strong support for the continuation of the work of the General Subject Committees and for giving greater importance to the activities of the Regional Coordinating Committees.
- iii) The Secretariat should provide information to the Codex Committee on General Principles concerning the possibility of establishing new Committees, such as the "Omnibus" Commodity Committee and a Committee on Environmental Contaminants.
- iv) The establishment of a Codex Committee on Environmental Contaminants (including mycotoxins and radio nuclides) was considered to have very high priority and this was recommended to the Commission by the Executive Committee.
- v) The formation of a "Codex Task Force" for direct contact with Codex Member Countries should be given consideration.
- vi) The periodic publications of a Codex Activities bulletin should be investigated.

- vii) The Codex Committee on General Principles should look into the Codex working mechanisms, and, if necessary, make recommendations for improvements.

DRAFT PROVISIONAL AGENDA FOR THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 22)

143. The Executive Committee had before it a draft provisional agenda for the Seventeenth Session of the Commission contained in document CX/EXEC 86/33/6. It was agreed, on the recommendation of the Representative of the Region of North America, Dr. N.W. Tape (Canada), that the topic of future direction of the work of the Programme should be brought forward in the agenda from its position as part of the Report of the Codex Committee on General Principles and should be a separate item. It was noted that the details in the draft provisional agenda would be updated, as necessary, in the light of the outcome of Sessions of Codex Committees held since the time the draft provisional agenda had been prepared by the Secretariat.

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 23)

144. Under this item Dr. Shubber (WHO), introduced the Resolution of the World Health Assembly on "Infant and Young Child Feeding" (WHA 39.28) for the information of the Executive Committee. He explained that, under that Resolution, the Director-General of WHO had been requested by the Assembly to specifically direct the attention of Member States and other interested parties to the fact that the practice being introduced in some countries of providing infants with specially formulated milks (so-called "follow-up" milks) is not necessary. (Paragraph 3(2)(b)).

145. He pointed out that the Executive Committee might be interested in the Resolution in view of the involvement of the Codex Committee for Special Dietary Uses in the development of a draft standard on "Follow-up Foods for Older Infants and Young Children". He said that during the discussions of the draft Resolution at Committee A of the World Health Assembly, some delegates had expressed the view that the Resolution might enlarge the scope of the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes. He pointed out that the Resolution did not enlarge the scope of the International Code, nor was it intended to do so.

146. The Coordinator for Europe, Mr. P. Rossier (Switzerland), mentioned that a standard for Follow-up Foods was currently being developed by the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses, because these products were moving in trade.