



**Food and Agriculture
Organization of
the United Nations**



**World Health
Organization**

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REP15/LAC

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

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REPORT ON THE 19th SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

**San José, Costa Rica
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The 19th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean reached the following conclusions:

Matters for consideration by the 38th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

The Committee:

- agreed on the need for revitalisation of RCCs and made a number of recommendations in this regard (para 44);
- agreed to request the Commission to encourage actions that favour the effective operation of committees and their electronic and physical working groups in the official languages of the Commission (para 135);
- agreed to recommend that Chile be appointed as Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean for a first term (para 139).

Other matters for information

The Committee:

- noted matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission (para 7);
- noted FAO and WHO capacity building activities on food quality and safety within the Region including capacity development needs and the successor initiative for the Codex Trust Fund and made a number of comments and recommendations (paras 19, 25, 26);
- acknowledged the information submitted by member countries of the Region on food control systems, consumer participation in food standards setting and use of Codex standards at national level and made a number of comments and recommendations (paras 48, 51, 53);
- returned the proposed draft Regional Standard for Yacon for further development, comments and consideration at its next session (para 58);
- exchanged views on various topics of regional interest and took regional positions on some of them for consideration by subsidiary bodies of the Commission or member countries of the Region (paras 64, 68, 74, 75, 80, 84, 89, 94, 95, 99, 104, 110, 111, 112, 141, 145, 150, 155, 162, 167, 168, 175);
- noted the developments regarding the regional website and other online tools and made a number of comments and recommendations (para 124);
- noted the status on the implementation of the CCLAC Strategic Plan (paras 125-129).

INTRODUCTION

1. The 19th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) was held in San José from 10 to 14 November 2014, at the kind invitation of the Government of Costa Rica. The Session was chaired by Mrs Isabel Cristina Araya, Director, Directorate of Regulatory Improvement and Technical Regulation, Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, and was attended by 28 member countries, two observer countries and five observer organisations. The list of participants is provided in Appendix I to this report.

Opening of the session

2. The FAO Representative in Costa Rica Mr Octavio Ramírez Mixter stated that strengthening national control systems for food safety is a concern and a priority for the CCLAC region and for FAO. The application of Codex Alimentarius standards and the complimentary activities of FAO and WHO, serve to support this effort. He also noted that the Codex Alimentarius Commission (CAC) had now endorsed the establishment of a framework for monitoring the implementation of the Strategic Plan to include mechanisms for systematic collection of data to facilitate evaluation of the information provided by the various countries. He described how the priorities for the region were complementary to the work of the Commission and how they aimed to strengthen the capacity of member countries relating to food safety and control and quality assurance and support their effective participation in Codex work. The FAO Representative concluded that the leadership of Costa Rica in CCLAC had allowed significant advances in a range of issues, and had led to the development of shared views on various matters relating to food safety and food quality, food standards and international trade which were all FAO priority issues in the region.
3. The PAHO/WHO Representative in Costa Rica Mr Enrique Perez, in welcoming participants, recognised the importance of the Codex Alimentarius in ensuring that food supply was safe and of high quality. He further acknowledged the importance of the discussions that would take place to improve standards, guidelines, codes and practices as well as improving safety, quality and equality in world food trade. He noted that the meeting was an opportunity to speak to other international organisations and to explain how the measures adopted under Codex were justified. It was also an opportunity for countries to identify areas of cooperation that would make it possible to take a regional stance in adopting Codex standards.
4. The Minister of Agriculture and Livestock Mr José Joaquín Salazar noted the importance of the Codex Alimentarius in a changing world, ensuring safe food for growing populations. He further noted how freeing up trade increased supply and opened the productive sector to new and broader markets. He emphasised the need to be creative and for public and private sectors to work together, with safety allowing member countries to compete successfully in international trade. He further emphasised that food safety control and management had to be sound and reliable with good practices and higher quality leading to greater competitiveness in exports. He concluded, expressing the need to reaffirm the institutional structures that respond effectively to society but without placing technical barriers on small-scale producers.
5. The Minister of Economy, Industry and Trade Mr Welmer Ramos stated that the Codex Alimentarius was critical for trade relations and for health standards under which world trade took place. He underlined the collective belief in the work of the Codex Alimentarius and the benefits its work brought, providing member countries with a transparent process for issuing standards and guidelines for trade with science as the basis for making decisions. The Minister described the enriching experience for Costa Rica hosting CCLAC for two terms and that the productive exchange of information had been a key factor in strengthening the Committee. He stressed that working together CCLAC achieved goals and developed a sense of regional belonging, tackling issues that affected everyone and striving to search for joint solutions. He concluded confirming that establishing regional objectives had made it possible for member countries to have their voices heard – an example for other regions. He encouraged the Committee to continue to develop joint views, policies and programmes to guarantee that high quality products reached the market.

ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)¹

6. The Committee adopted the Provisional as its Agenda for the Session and agreed to consider the following matters in addition to those scheduled for discussion in the agenda subject to availability of time:

¹ [CX/LAC 14/19/1](#)

Agenda Item 12 – Other business

- Performance criteria for reference and confirmatory methods for marine biotoxins (section I-8.6 determination of biotoxins) in the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Mollusc (CODEX STAN 292-2008);
- Principles for the harmonisation of food labelling;
- Safety assessment and revised specification for steviol glycosides;
- Development of an international standard for quinoa;
- Guide for data generation to perform the exposure assessment to cadmium in cocoa bean and cocoa based products;
- Member of CCEXEC for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region;
- Biofortification in Codex;
- Recent activities of the Chair of the CAC;
- Concerns related to WTO/SPS²-related private standards.

MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 2)³

7. The Committee noted the information provided.

FAO/WHO activities relevant to the region, identifying priorities and capacity development needs (Agenda Item 3)⁴

8. The Chairperson presented the paper and outlined the challenges in capacity development with the use of a table to summarise the information, including a list of priorities for 2014.
9. The regional Representative of WHO, spoke on the priorities for capacity building as outlined in the Chairperson's presentation.
10. He noted the work carried out to strengthen the reference laboratories for food safety. The Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories (INFAL), Pulsenet Latin America and the Caribbean network, and the Global Foodborne Infections Network (WHO-GFN) are working in 33 different countries in the region creating a collaborative network. He highlighted:
- the creation and use of common laboratory and procedural protocols among countries to promote effective diagnosis and surveillance techniques;
 - the creation of shared databases for knowledge sharing and improved diagnostic capabilities;
 - high-end technology such as Pulsed-Field Gel Electrophoresis (PFGE) Fingerprint technology;
 - procedure manuals and laboratory protocols established and distributed worldwide.
11. He further noted that food borne disease surveillance and response systems (with the basic core capacities required by International Health Regulations) exist in every country and cover a variety of diseases and syndromes. Each country's surveillance and response system is unique with different levels of development and complexity. But all provide the platform for developing capacities in food safety related to foodborne diseases, including diseases and events caused by chemicals in food.
12. He confirmed that the International Food Safety Authorities Network (INFOSAN) now has a regional strategy developed during a workshop in Chile in September 2014.
13. He further explained, that regarding consumer exposure to food contaminants, work is being pursued through total diet studies, a project of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) has recently been approved and a regional meeting to plan national protocols for selected countries will be held soon.
14. He concluded stating that good manufacturing practice (GMP), hazard analysis and critical control point (HACCP) and auditing training will continue in the region.

² Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the World Trade Organization (WTO/SPS Agreement)

³ [CX/LAC 14/19/2](#)

⁴ [CX/LAC 14/19/3](#); [CX/LAC 14/19/3-Add.1](#); [CRD4](#) (Costa Rica); [CRD7](#) (Dominican Republic); [CRD12](#) (El Salvador)

15. This Delegation of the Dominican Republic expressed concern that the table used for the Chairperson's presentation had not been distributed to the CCPs and confirmed that they had submitted comments for CX/LAC 14/19/3, which had not been included.
16. In response it was clarified that the document presented a summary of the information about the challenges identified by FAO and WHO, with respect to the development of capacities, in order to facilitate discussion and to establish clear priorities for both organizations. It was confirmed that the omissions would be corrected.
17. One delegation urged member countries to build closer ties with reference laboratories to strengthen the link between their work and Codex standards.
18. Following a question, the Chairperson clarified that the list of priorities in the table was not hierarchical.

Conclusion

19. The Committee thanked FAO/WHO for all the support provided in the efforts to strengthen country capacities and agreed on the list of priorities as described in the revised table to be supported by FAO and WHO:
 - Strengthen the reference laboratories for food safety (staff training and accreditation);
 - Actions that allow recognition of the work of the Codex by decision makers for more support and resources and for strengthening the national committees;
 - Cooperation funds for resources to increase participation and effective participation;
 - Support to countries in the design and reformulation of public food safety policy;
 - Propose to FAO and WHO cooperation projects to strengthen mechanisms for coordination, collaboration and exchange of safety information for the control and prevention of foodborne diseases, response to emergencies (alert systems);
 - Support for the generation of data on consumer exposure to foodborne hazards and other data of importance for the risk analysis, traceability and priorities for submission to the expert groups (Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA), Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR), Joint FAO/WHO Expert Meeting on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA), etc);
 - Improve the ability of food small and medium enterprises (SMEs) to implement GMP, HACCP certified systems that enable them to ensure "food safety" and also the development of strategies for information education and communication (IEC) for producers and consumers to strengthen this topic;
 - Promote information, education and communication for consumers in order to strengthen citizen's active participation in the implementation of Codex strategies;
 - Support and work alongside the countries in harmonising and coordinating integrated risk based food inspection systems.

Successor initiative to the Codex Trust Fund

20. The WHO Representative called attention to the added value of Codex Trust Fund-supported FAO/WHO capacity development activities aimed at enhancing effective participation in Codex and updated CCLAC members on the timetable for the final project evaluation and the different ways in which countries may be called upon to contribute. She outlined the current thinking around a 3-pillar approach that would provide for: 1) tailored support to individual beneficiary countries to meet their specific needs; 2) support to Codex capacity development for groups of countries in regions/sub-regions to address common needs; 3) possible support to continue to address the need to enhance countries scientific/technical input to Codex. Feedback was requested on whether member countries felt that the preliminary ideas were going in the right direction with the right elements that would respond to the future needs of countries.
21. In their interventions delegations supported the 3-pillar approach and the move from wide support to more tailor-made, multi-annual approaches. Several delegations highlighted that eligibility criteria needed to go beyond current rules and include other aspects such as effectiveness of participation, identified country needs, as well as consideration of the specific needs of small island countries. Concern was also raised regarding the existence of a graduation scheme.

22. One delegation requested to submit for formal consideration by CCLAC, the complaint from delegates supported by the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) involving air tickets, travel expenditure and per diem for the representatives from their governments. They expressed the desire that these issues not reoccur with the successor initiative.
23. Another delegation noted that the Procedural Manual (section 6.7) describes lines of communication, and that the CCPs should receive invitations to meetings and transmit them to the appropriate ministries which would increase participation and strengthen the structures in different countries.
24. The WHO Representative thanked countries for their active discussions and guidance. She reiterated that the move to a more tailored approach to better address country needs also required countries to take ownership and accountability of the capacity building work, and that better monitoring of the impact of CTF-supported work needed to take place. Overall, CTF activities will move from participation in Codex activities to also strengthen Codex work in countries, including implementation of Codex standards. She reiterated that all comments and views from the 6 Codex regions would be taken into account in the further development of a proposal for a CTF successor initiative, that will be presented at the 38th Session of the CAC.

Conclusion

25. The Committee:
 - supported the proposal of the 3 pillars for the new initiative for the CTF;
 - confirmed that multi annual packages should be adjusted to the specific needs of each country;
 - drew attention to criteria for eligibility that need to go beyond the current ones and need to include an evaluation of effective participation as well as to consider priorities for committees as set by each country;
 - noted that it is important to extend preferential treatment to small island states;
 - pointed to the importance of improving operational efficiency and communications with CCPs in the countries;
 - recommended the proposal from Costa Rica (CRD4) be considered by WHO/FAO.
26. The Committee noted the request of the Delegation of Dominican Republic that the approaches set out in the current draft Trust Fund, Annex 1, title D3, paragraphs 1 and 2 (CRD7) be maintained in the successor initiative.

REVITALISATION OF FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEES - PROPOSALS ON STRENGTHENING THE ROLE AND PLATFORM OF RCCs (Agenda Item 4)⁵

27. The Codex Secretariat presented the paper and explained that the terms of reference of the regional coordinating committees (RCCs) fell under two broad categories: 1) supporting the standard setting and other work of the Commission from the regional point of view and 2) giving input from the region to the capacity building work of FAO and WHO. The Secretariat explained that the paper intended to start a process to identify what could be done more efficiently at the regional level through the RCCs, sharing the vision that RCCs could become the pre-eminent regional fora for food safety and quality in the region.
28. The Codex Secretariat summarised the challenges identified in the paper concerning 1) the system for data collection/dissemination regarding national food control/regulation and national use of Codex standards; 2) the need to closely link regional strategic plans (where they are needed at all) to the global Codex Strategic Plan, and 3) that definition of regional positions and views should mainly serve the purpose of informing the Coordinator to fulfil their role as full members of the Executive Committee (CCEXEC) and that inflexible positions could lead to problems when negotiating in technical committees and the Commission.
29. The WHO Representative emphasised that this was a proposal being presented to all the RCCs for general feedback underlining the goal to strengthen the role of RCCs.

⁵ [CX/LAC 14/19/4](#); [CRD1](#) (Codex Strategy Plan 2014-2019); [CRD2](#) (Draft template to collect information on official government control for food safety and quality); [CRD8](#) (Costa Rica and Dominican Republic); [CRD12](#) (El Salvador)

30. The Representative explained further that aligning the agendas of all RCCs would aid streamlining and coordination and this was not to exclude specific items of interest for the regions. The only new item to be added to these agendas would be a proposal to include in RCCs a high level, key note speech or platform discussion in order to inform a broader audience outside the Codex family and to create interest and awareness and more political buy-in for food safety and quality issues.
31. She also explained that replacing the current system of circular letters (CL) with an online database would be more sustainable, provide for better evaluation of the information and show developments over time in regions. She emphasised that details of how to share and analyse information would require more discussion.
32. She further explained the need to develop a mechanism to better identify priorities in food safety and quality, to be more forward looking and feed into FAO/WHO in the capacity building and scientific advice areas. She noted that the best solution for achieving these goals may change from region to region.
33. She also emphasised the need for monitored regional plans that were complimentary to and fed into the global strategic plan.
34. Following this introduction, the following comments were made.
35. There was general support for the proposals. However several delegations expressed concerns that the wording of the text regarding regional positions could limit the freedom of the RCCs to develop such positions, a right which had been confirmed by the Committee on General Principles (CCGP). They stressed that it was not the intention to obstruct discussions in global committees and the Commission but to facilitate bringing the opinion of all members of the region to these fora. They were of the opinion that a relevant standing agenda item should be added to the CCLAC agenda.
36. One delegation noted that the proposal did not recognise the need to discuss items that went beyond food safety and quality standards such as items of a general or procedural nature and that this freedom was important as it allowed CCLAC to discuss items of specific interest and to accept them or not.
37. The Codex Secretariat noted that the proposals did not intend to restrict regional committees in discussing specific issues relevant to the region and establishing regional positions when appropriate.
38. Regarding data collection, some delegations noted, whilst favouring efficiency and modernisation, that there would have to be a broader discussion if the Committee were to replace the current system, and requested the Codex Secretariat to provide more details on the proposed online platform to collect data.
39. On the consistency between regional and global strategic plans, one delegation, whilst expressing their agreement, argued that the inclusion of specific regional issues in the regional plan should remain possible and should not be seen as incompatible with the global strategic plan.
40. On the introduction of the keynote speaker, one delegation questioned how such a speaker might be selected and what the role of the regional coordinator would be.
41. In response to the issues raised by delegations, the WHO Representative confirmed that the intention of the proposal to have a common agenda with key items for all RCCs did not prevent the inclusion of additional agenda items of relevance to the region.
42. With regard to regional positions she re-iterated that it may be very important to alert countries to work of relevance to the region, since not all countries were able to participate and follow closely the work in all Codex committees. As such it was important to exchange views, however care should be taken to not develop regional positions which would limit negotiations and compromise the work of specific committees.
43. With respect to the replacement of the CL with an on-line database, she clarified that further details needed to be elaborated, but the current thinking was to develop an on-line database that allowed countries to update information on the status of food safety systems continuously, e.g. through the national CCP. Prior to the RCC a CL could be issued with a time-line for update, the Codex Secretariat could then prepare a summary of information for discussion at the meeting.

Conclusion

44. The Committee:
 - supported the general idea of the FAO and WHO proposal for the revitalisation of the coordinating committees;

- expressed interest in retaining matters of interest to the region on its agenda as well as maintaining the Committee's ability to adopt regional positions;
- agreed that an item shall be added to the agenda entitled "relevant Codex activities for the region";
- supported the idea that the regional strategic plan should be in line with the global strategic plan, while recognising the need to include specific regional issues which may not have a correspondence to the global strategic plan;
- supported replacement of CLs with the new platform.

COMMENTS AND INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AND THE USE OF CODEX (Agenda Item 5)⁶

45. The Chairperson presented a summary of the replies received from member countries in response to CL 2014/23-LAC as described in CRD6. It was noted that replies from Barbados and Nicaragua had been recently received (reproduced as conference room documents - CRDs) but not in time to be included in the summary findings.
46. The Delegation of Belize provided a general update on actions taken at the national level to strengthen its food control system and informed the Committee that in addition to the priority committees listed by CCLAC, the Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables (CCFFV), the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) and the Committee on General Principles were also of importance to Belize.

Question # 1: Strengthening national food control systems

47. It was noted that it would be more appropriate to use the term "specialised agencies" and not "formal agencies" however that the agencies should have legal standing to be in a position to impose sanctions where appropriate.
48. The Committee adopted the following recommendations:
- Prioritise training for laboratory staff and food monitoring authorities;
 - Learn best practices in relation to food control;
 - Support to establish specialised monitoring and surveillance agencies with powers of enforcement.

Question # 2: Strengthening Codex at the national level

49. The low level of responses on "strengthening national positions" was noted and that this was perhaps due to different interpretations of the survey question.
50. In the discussion several member countries noted that they had indeed not correctly interpreted the question and that they had indeed taken measures to strengthen the development of their national positions.
51. The Committee adopted the following recommendations:
- Provide outreach material on the work and importance of Codex;
 - Strengthen the theme of digital systems to improve monitoring;
 - Foster proposing new standards of interest to the region;
 - Share experiences in the management of CCPs (Twinning Programme).

Question # 3: CODEX Standards: Priorities and national interests

52. The Chairperson noted that in the future the submission process would be easier when the new digital platform replaced traditional CLs.
53. The Committee adopted the following recommendations:
- Develop more specific guidelines for industry on the topic of "Best Practices for Food Hygiene";
 - Support for the implementation of control systems and risk-based inspection.

⁶ [CL 2014/23-CL](#); [CX/LAC 14/19/5](#) (comments of Argentina, Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, Panama, Paraguay and Saint Lucia); [CRD3](#) (comments of Barbados, Brazil, Chile and Nicaragua); [CRD6](#) (Costa Rica); [CRD10](#) (Dominica); [CRD11](#) (St Vincent and the Grenadines); [CRD15](#) (Belize)

PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR YACON (Agenda Item 6)⁷

54. The Committee noted that the proposed draft Standard had been prepared by an electronic working group (eWG) led by Argentina. In view of the absence of the lead country, the Committee agreed to collect general comments from the floor on the proposed draft with a view to its further revision by an eWG in order to then finalize the Standard by CCLAC20 (2016) which was the deadline for completion of this work.
55. The Committee noted the following comments:
- Section 1 – Definition of Produce: The Standard should also cover commercial types as in other countries of the region as “types” rather than “varieties” were used in the trade of yacon.
 - Section 2 – Minimum Requirements: Provisions for “well developed” should be removed as they were adequately covered by other provisions under this section and might contradict provisions for quality defects and tolerances (i.e. shape) in sections 2.2 and 4.1. In addition, provisions for “loss of colour in the flesh” should be deleted as colour of the flesh could vary from a whitish cream colour to deep red/purple therefore it would be difficult to judge a loss of colour in the flesh of yacon.
 - Section 3 – Sizing: The sizing table should be further examined to ensure that all commercial varieties / types covered by the Standard were adequately addressed.
 - Section 6.2.5 – Official Inspection Mark (optional): This provision is a standardised provision applying as such in Codex standards for fresh fruits and vegetables, however if further explanation for the purposes of addressing the particular characteristics of yacon were needed, the eWG could consider additional text for inclusion under this section.
56. The Committee noted no further comments on the remaining sections of the Standard.

Conclusion

57. The Committee agreed to establish an eWG chaired by Peru and co-chaired by Belize, working in English and Spanish, to continue to develop the Standard based on the comments submitted to this Session and those provided by the members of the eWG.

STATUS OF THE PROPOSED DRAFT REGIONAL STANDARD FOR YACON

58. The Committee returned the proposed draft Standard to Step 2/3 for further development, comments and finalisation by the 20th Session of CCLAC.

CODEX WORK RELEVANT TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 7)⁸

59. The Chairperson introduced the paper and invited individual countries to present the issues they had raised.

Risk Analysis Principles applied by the Pesticide Residues Committee

60. The Delegation of Brazil introduced the item and drew the attention of the Committee to the inconsistency existing in the risk analysis principles applied by the Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR), related to the Periodic Review Procedure of Pesticides with a view to revision or withdrawal of pesticides or maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticides, and the *Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius* as well as the risk analysis principles applied by other subsidiary bodies of the Commission.
61. Several delegations voiced concerns in relation to the application of the Periodic Review Procedure, which was seen as an inconsistency in the safety assessment of pesticides. It was stated that other committees did not carry out a periodic review by which if the chemical was no longer supported by the original sponsor and no new data could be supplied by interested member countries or observers the pesticide and/or related MRLs were withdrawn without scientific evidence that there was a threat to human health. It was stated that existing MRLs were science-based so in cases where there was no new data available to substantiate their review, the pesticide and/or related MRLs should be maintained until new or additional scientific data could demonstrate there was a risk for human health.

⁷ [CX/LAC 14/19/6](#); [CX/LAC 14/19/6-Add.1](#) (comments of Ecuador and Peru); [CRD12](#) (El Salvador)

⁸ [CX/LAC 14/19/7](#); [CRD12](#) (El Salvador)

62. The delegations therefore recommended requesting the CCGP to analyse the inconsistency in the risk analysis principles applied by CCPR vis-à-vis the various committees and the *General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius*, the *Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Application in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius* and the *Statements of Principles concerning the role of science in the Codex decision-making process and the extent to which other factors are taken into account* so that CCPR could make its decisions on the same basis as other committees, as Codex decision-making should be based on scientific principles.
63. In response to the concerns raised, the WHO Representative indicated that there was no apparent inconsistency in the application of risk analysis principles and that CCPR decisions were science-based. Revocation of MRLs was based on lack of data to ensure the safety of residues in food, and not based on a fixed time schedule. She outlined the process as follows: if a compound is scheduled for re-evaluation a call for data will be published by the JMPR secretariat. If data are not submitted by the original data sponsor, but countries still see the need for use of the compound then they should provide relevant data to allow for a re-evaluation. Since pesticides are toxic by their very nature, a periodic review process was implemented by CCPR to assure human health, and replace more hazardous with less hazardous substances.

Conclusion

64. The Committee expressed the view that differences exist between CCPR and other committees that apply risk analysis in the establishment of food safety standards, as the CCPR set a specific term for re-evaluation for pesticides and requested updated information which, if not available, meant that the pesticides and/or related MRLs were revoked. Other committees however revoked safety standards only when there was new information that the pesticide compromised human health. The CCGP should therefore examine this issue at its next session in 2015 and make recommendations on how to resolve this difference when considering the consistency of the risk analysis texts across committees.

Implementation of the Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019

65. The Delegation of Brazil stated the need to implement the Strategic Plan 2014-2019 in accordance with the Procedural Manual, as this would ensure that Codex continued to base its decisions on scientific principles and to take into account, where appropriate, other legitimate factors only related to health protection of consumers and for fair practices in food trade.
66. This view was widely supported.
67. The Codex Secretariat reaffirmed that the Procedural Manual is the highest level of authority for Codex work. He explained that the phrase regarding “relevant factors” in the Strategic Plan was to ensure transparency in risk management decisions taken.

Conclusion

68. The Committee reiterated that Codex must base its decisions on scientific principles and risk analysis. Therefore the inclusion of other relevant factors must only consider those that affect consumer health. Moreover it should also be alert to ensure that the implementation of the CAC Strategic Plan is consistent with the Codex mandate and the Procedural Manual.

Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts

69. The Delegation of Brazil expressed its concern on proposed changes to the Procedural Manual, and particularly to the *Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts*, arguing that the current provisions on the Rules were sufficient in terms of transparency and coordination of work among the general subject committees and commodity committees.
70. The Delegation therefore recommended not supporting either of the proposed amendments submitted to the 37th Session of the Commission for adoption. Several other delegations agreed with this position.
71. One delegation, however, noted that the guidelines contained in Procedural Manual were not static, should be open to review (if that meant making them more efficient) and that the CCGP provided for that process. The Delegation encouraged broader debate in CCGP and recommended examining the scope of the proposed amendments (particularly amendment 2 in CX/LAC 14/19/7) as they could improve coordination between committees without detracting from work that already took place.
72. An observer delegation, whilst recognising the merit of the wording of the amendments regarding coordination, stated that these structures already existed in the Procedural Manual but needed to be followed more closely. The delegation warned of the dangers in starting a process of amending the Procedural Manual.

73. The Codex Secretariat, whilst not rejecting the wording of the proposed amendments, stated that Codex coordination was good both due to processes in the Secretariat and the critical review oversight function of CCEXEC.

Conclusion

74. The Committee emphasised the importance of coordination amongst committees. Most of the member countries agreed there was no need to make changes to the Procedural Manual because the current provisions were sufficient to ensure transparency and coordination between general committees and commodity committees. Nevertheless, the Committee encouraged a process of strengthening this coordination and emphasised that this coordination task pertained to the Codex Secretariat, the Chairs of the committees and the CCEXEC.
75. The Delegations of Chile and Colombia recognised that the Procedural Manual adequately expressed the need for coordination, but recommended that CCGP consider the scope for providing advice for coordination among subsidiary bodies of the Commission.

Recombinant Bovine Somatotropin (rBST) – Standard held at Step 8

76. The Delegations of Brazil and Costa Rica noted that the MRL for rBST has been held at Step 8 since 1999, despite having the scientific basis needed for approval by the Codex Alimentarius Commission. As the report of JECFA would be presented for consideration by the 22nd Session of the Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods (CCRVDF) and the draft MRLs for BST held at Step 8 would be considered by the Commission in 2015 in light of the CCRVDF recommendations, they recommended CCLAC adopt a position on the matter, as repeated assessments by JECFA had concluded that the drug was harmless and in order to respect the scientific principles in Codex decision-making.
77. There was general support for this proposal although several delegations were unable as yet to adopt a position themselves due to legislative or other national, technical issues.
78. The Delegation of Uruguay while stating that its national technical regulations did not allow the use of rBST said, that it would however would refrain from taking a position on the adoption of the MRL in line with the Codex principles of science based decision making.
79. In this regard, the Delegation of Uruguay said that there was an error in the JECFA report No. 78 page 94 and in the document submitted by Brazil and Costa Rica (CX/LAC 14/19/7) as rBST was not registered in the country.

Conclusion

80. The Committee reiterated its support for the use of science when Codex decisions were made as well as respect and recognition for the work of FAO/WHO expert scientific committees. The Committee noted that a number of delegations approved the adoption of the MRL for rBST whilst other countries were not yet able to adopt a position.

Proposed amendments to the Terms of Reference of the Committee on General Principles

81. The Delegations of Brazil and Costa Rica proposed that CCLAC members develop a proposal for harmonisation of the Terms of Reference of CCGP with those of other committees to be discussed at the next CCGP session. They mentioned that it was important to ensure that the CCGP would not become a self-tasking committee but serve the CAC upon request.
82. The Codex Secretariat clarified that the proposal to amend the current CCGP TOR had been made originally to simplify them and harmonise them in principle with other committees because they contained specific examples of past work. Removing just these examples while maintaining the first sentence would ensure that the CCGP would only work on request from CAC.
83. There was support for the proposal but also some requests for clarification as to how it would be possible to harmonise the mandates of all committees when those committees actually had their own specific mandates.

Conclusion

84. The Committee agreed on the importance of simplifying and harmonising the mandate of the CCGP with those of other Codex committees and agreed that countries should discuss in greater detail the proposal submitted by WHO/FAO in order to submit a position on this matter to the CCGP.

Meetings of coordinators during CCEXEC

85. The Delegation of Costa Rica proposed that the CCEXEC establish an informal meeting for countries that were Codex regional coordinators to exchange experiences and to increase interregional coordination. They suggested a meeting date on the Thursday of the CCEXEC session prior to the CAC.
86. Several delegations expressed support for the benefits of holding such informal or “information” meetings in terms of better coordination between member countries, fostering of partnerships, opportunities for capacity building and greater understanding of diverse positions on common issues.
87. The Codex Secretariat welcomed this initiative, and noted that the coordinators were already members of the informal meeting of chairs that usually met during CCGP and CAC, and that meetings of the incoming and outgoing coordinators were organised by the Codex Secretariat during the CAC. He recognised the particular interest of coordinators to meet for inter-regional coordination and said that the Secretariat could facilitate their meeting in conjunction with the informal meeting of chairs.
88. The Delegation of Switzerland, speaking as Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, welcomed this initiative. She mentioned the very useful informal meetings of chairs, which had allowed participants to address issues common to all chairs and had also given them the opportunity for training to improve chairing skills. She was grateful for the offer of the Codex Secretariat to provide logistical support to these meetings.

Conclusion

89. The Committee acknowledged the importance of regional coordinators sharing issues of concern and of interest with one another to improve inter-regional communication, collaboration and cohesion. The Committee encouraged the Codex Secretariat to provide the logistical support necessary to hold information meetings among regional coordinators in addition to the informal meeting of chairs organised in the margins of the CCEXEC and CAC sessions.

Shiga-like toxin producing E. coli (STEC) in meat and other food

90. The Delegation of Uruguay presented its concern to CCLAC on the prioritisation of the issue of “Shiga-like toxin producing E. coli (STEC) in meat and other food” in the Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH). The Delegation noted that in the report of the 45th Session of CCFH it was assumed that this was a significant pathogen of beef and the Committee undertook to include STEC in beef in its future workplan, which is supported by Appendix 3 of CX/FH 14/46/11.
91. The Delegation recommended the drafting of a guideline or standard that defined procedures to check for the possible presence of STEC O157 and non-O157 in food and recommended requesting scientific advice from WHO/FAO for the purposes of carrying out a microbiological risk assessment of intensive and extensive meat-production systems (as well as other foods considered high risk or that may constitute public health issues). There was support for this recommendation.
92. The FAO Representative and the Codex Secretariat reminded delegations that CCFH procedures for prioritisation of work and subsequent proposals for new work needed to be followed for such initiatives. If CCLAC wished to make a recommendation it should follow CCFH procedures.
93. The Codex Secretariat noted that only member countries could submit proposals for consideration by committees and approval by the Commission. In line with the above, the Codex Secretariat further clarified that CCLAC could not task CCFH but could only encourage CCLAC members to request the CCFH to work on this matter.

Conclusion

94. The Committee expressed its concern about public health problems and trade difficulties and the lack of international harmonisation associated with E.coli which produces the shiga-like toxin (STEC) in meat. Therefore it agreed to ask the members of the region participating in CCFH46 (2014) to support new work on this subject as found in Appendix 3 of CX/FH 14/46/11 (CCFH work priorities - Proposals for new work and/or revision of existing standards) for consideration by CCFH, and to express this in the Committee.
95. It was noted that the Delegation of Brazil only supported this work for ruminant beef, but that this did not constitute a reservation.

Guidelines for the Control of Nontyphoidal Salmonella spp. in Beef and Pork

96. The Delegation of Brazil summarised the background to this issue and put forward the following recommendations:

- The examples used in the proposed Guidelines should be general, without any mention of specific products or commodities, as the purpose of this type of document could be misinterpreted and the information used for unnecessary health regulations that would not serve to protect consumer health or ensure fair practices in the food trade;
- Statements such as “subject to the national legislation of the importing country” or “subject to approval by the relevant authority” should not be used in Codex;
- Other species, such as *Bos indicus*, should be included when referring to beef in these Guidelines.

97. These recommendations were supported and particularly the wish to not see statements such as “subject to the national legislation of the importing country” or “subject to approval by the relevant authority” in Codex standards and related texts.

98. One observer delegation added that the Procedural Manual in its *General Principles* and in the *Statements of Principle Concerning the Role of Science in the Codex Decision-Making Process* already provided Codex members with guidance on this subject and clearly indicated that national legislation is not a factor that Codex should consider.

Conclusion

99. Based on comments made, the Committee acknowledged the concern expressed by several members from the region regarding the references made to national legislation in Codex documents. The Committee invited the countries from the region to take this matter into consideration, as well as other matters raised by Brazil at the next CCFH session.

Note 161

100. The Delegation of Costa Rica noted current discussions underway in the Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) to replace Note 161 in more technical terms with more specific wording to be adopted on a case-by-case basis. They proposed that the alternatives to Note 161 being discussed should be examined more thoroughly and recommended that specific notes used to replace Note 161 should not be more trade restrictive in nature than the actual Note 161 referring to national legislation of importing countries.

101. There was support for the proposal to eliminate the use of Note 161 from the General Standard for Food Additives (GSFA).

102. The Delegation of Brazil also outlined the current situation regarding the use of Note 161 and felt it important for the Committee to note, when adopting a position, that work on this matter was still on-going in CCFA.

103. The Delegation considered it necessary to collaborate on the current work of CCFA on Note 161 and suggested: that existing uses of note 161 be examined on a case by case basis to either eliminate or replace them; that no reference be made in them to national legislation and that the principles established in the Preamble of the GSFA be considered. This was supported by the Delegation of Uruguay.

Conclusion

104. The Committee reiterated its support for the elimination of the use of Note 161 in the GSFA.

Processed Cheese

105. The Delegation of Uruguay presented the background on the on-going work on processed cheese, with a view to strengthening regional consensus on the most relevant aspects, prior to a physical meeting scheduled for early 2015 on the proposed draft of the Standard.

106. The Delegation recommended presenting a solid regional position in the various stages of the drafting of the standard, seeking alternatives for those points on which broad consensus had not been reached in previous discussions i.e. levels of cheese content; the addition of other ingredients such as starch and gelatine; and issues regarding product labelling.

107. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the region had made a major effort to take up the whole topic of processed cheese in Codex and, in support of Uruguay, urged delegations to maintain this effort to its conclusion. She requested delegations send in information, give opinions and build a consensus-based proposal to submit so as not to miss this opportunity.

108. There was strong support from delegations to develop a regional position and recommendations were made to hold meetings via video conference before the upcoming meeting of the physical working group (pWG) in early 2015 and to ensure that those countries that would be unable to send delegations from the capital briefed their diplomatic delegations in Brussels thoroughly so as to register them and ensure their participation in the working group.
109. One observer delegation confirmed their commitment to the pWG, however, they also indicated that they did not see any impediment to trade in processed cheese products, which had grown steadily over the previous few years. They saw no obvious gaps in safety and quality provisions of existing Codex horizontal texts. They also opposed the creation of a standard for a product analogous to processed cheese. As with processed cheese products, they expressed the view that there was no current impediment to international trade in these products, and no gaps in the safety or quality provisions in existing Codex horizontal texts.

Conclusion

110. The Committee expressed its support for the development of an international standard on processed cheese.
111. The Committee noted the call of the Delegation of Uruguay for CCLAC members to reply to their questionnaire at their earliest convenience to ensure the results were available for the upcoming meeting of the working group in January 2015.
112. The Committee recommended that a video conference be held in order to build consensus on critical aspects of the proposal and encouraged member countries to participate directly in the Brussels meeting of the working group or through their diplomatic delegations.

STATUS OF THE CCLAC WEBPAGE (Agenda Item 8)⁹

113. The Committee recalled that at its last session the difficulty of maintaining the websites of RCCs active and current had been discussed in particular in light of the fact that the regional coordinator changed every 2 to 4 years. The Codex Secretariat at that time had indicated that it would explore the possibility to host the regional websites on the main Codex website while the responsibility for providing content and updating it would remain with the coordinators.
114. The Codex Secretariat gave a live demonstration of the work carried out thus far on the new regional websites. He explained that a structure had been designed to meet the needs of all RCCs after an analysis of the contents of the present RCC websites. He mentioned that the present sites had duplicated content from the main Codex website but in the new structure relevant data was included dynamically from the Codex database.
115. He described and demonstrated the simple modular features of the site that would be easy to edit for regional coordinators without specific web or programming skills. He added that future initiatives on the site would include a forum for document sharing and threads for expressing opinions and stimulating discussion. He also confirmed that content on the website would be published in the languages appropriate to the different regions.
116. He also informed delegations of the initiative to move all Codex documents to the Microsoft Sharepoint platform, which would allow for the inclusion of additional Codex documents types such as working documents, CLs and CRDs in the Codex database in addition to the documents already included (agendas, reports and standards). This would allow them to be searchable and also offer more possibilities for users to select content and be informed of updates. He further informed the Committee that in cooperation with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), an online commenting system was under preparation as well as a platform supporting eWGs.
117. Regarding video conferencing tools, he said that there were no plans at this moment for including these on the website, however a number of possible tools were being reviewed for possible future application.
118. Regarding the use of social media such as twitter or facebook, he explained that social networks had to be updated consistently to be effective. He also explained that the facebook account for the name "Codex Alimentarius" was presently occupied by an anti-Codex activist group. He said that because of the risks related to some open platforms, the Secretariat, at present, preferred to maintain Codex information on a page that they controlled entirely. The creation of a twitter account could however be considered. He stated that keeping the page updated and filled with news was a challenge and one of his main goals for the immediate future. He invited all delegations to contribute news which could be uploaded on the website.

⁹ [CX/LAC 14/19/8](#); [CRD12](#) (El Salvador)

119. Regarding frequently asked questions (FAQs), he said that work on such a section on the website was underway. He said that as with the news this was a high priority for the Codex Secretariat and all delegations were invited to share interesting FAQs for possible publication.
120. Regarding linking/including online training courses he responded that this requests could readily be accommodated and technical assistance provided.
121. The Committee noted suggestions to create mobile applications (apps) to use hyperlinks in the list of participants to link to their parent organisations.
122. The Codex Secretariat indicated that the regional websites could go “live” on a test basis from January 2015 and that the appropriate work would be also be done to ensure that the new site appeared high in search engine rankings. He offered to work closely with the current and future coordinator to ensure that the CCLAC page could go online at that time.

Conclusion

123. The Committee noted and welcomed the developments regarding the regional websites and other online tools and invited member countries to provide any contributions and suggestions directly to the Codex Secretariat.
124. The Committee adopted the following recommendations:
 - Use social media for Codex as appropriate;
 - Introduce FAQs on the website;
 - Explore the future possibility of implementing video-conferencing technology and mobile applications;
 - Implement eWGs on a new platform and work towards digital meetings further in the future;
 - Publish a pilot of the CCLAC site in January 2015;
 - Request Costa Rica to make every effort to ensure that CCLAC begins to implement the new website as early as possible.

REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CCLAC STRATEGIC PLAN (Agenda Item 9)¹⁰

125. In compliance with the decision adopted at CCLAC18 (2012), the Chair presented a status report on implementation of the CCLAC Strategic Plan for which she received support and congratulations from the Committee.
126. It was emphasised that work had been carried out in conjunction with the Strategic Plan of the CAC and that there had been strong development in terms of regional belonging and inclusiveness, the need to work in a strategic way and empower the synergies between countries in the region.
127. Specifically, she stressed that one of the greatest efforts was on the constant use of both Spanish and English in order to enhance effective communication. She noted important advances in the management of the CCPs and information exchange through the use of the Regional Digital System, the development of multiple videoconferencing (English and Spanish) with its recording and bilingual executive summary, the preparation of preliminary meetings, colloquia and a procedure for issuing regional positions.
128. As part of developing and strengthening the capacity of countries she highlighted the partnership programme, internships in and outside the region, the creation of support materials (bilingual booklet on Responsibilities of national delegates and CCLAC bilingual course on Codex for diplomatic officers) and workshops held focused on risk analysis.
129. She concluded that in order to improve the ability of member countries to provide inputs to expert committees, meetings had taken place between technical committees, a set of guidelines had been developed on how to forward data to expert committees and video conferences had been held with experts from FAO and WHO.

¹⁰

[CX/LAC 14/19/9](#)

DISCUSSION PAPER ON ELECTRONIC WORKING GROUPS AND PHYSICAL WORKING GROUPS (Agenda Item 10)¹¹

130. The Delegation of the Dominican Republic introduced the paper and emphasised the need for the Committee to send a message to CCEXEC and CAC that the fact that most electronic working groups operated in English only (as well as some physical working groups) was a serious impediment to participation for members of the region. Developing countries, that did not have English as their official language, found themselves excluded from the normative work of specific documents or topics, only because the technical experts in the related fields were not proficient in English. A similar situation had also arisen in meetings of pWGs where simultaneous translation had not been provided.
131. The Delegation requested that the CAC ensure that all the work of the Committee, the electronic working groups and the physical working groups was in the official languages of the Commission, which would also be in line with the Procedural Manual and the Codex Strategic Plan.
132. The proposal received wide support and additional comments were made concerning the possibility of making such requests mandatory and also on the actual quality and accuracy of translated documents.
133. One observer delegation, whilst agreeing with the sentiment expressed, cautioned delegations that it could be challenging to attempt to make an eWG function in two or more languages. Indeed imposing two or more languages could involve additional expense and create a reluctance to lead. One solution could be that a Spanish-speaking country offer to Co-Chair such groups and thus provide the translations needed. This had been successfully tried out in a number of eWGs in different committees.
134. The Codex Secretariat noted that much Codex work depended on the voluntary contributions of host governments (operating expenses of subsidiary bodies of the Commission except CAC, CCEXEC and coordinating committees were covered by the host country secretariats of the committees) and that, with over 50 eWGs, any additional costs would be an issue for the hosts of working groups, the Codex Secretariat and the Commission. He further explained that a considerable effort was being made with physical working groups to provide full language support. He also explained that the decision on languages was taken by the committee at the moment of the formation of the WG and cautioned making the language requests obligatory, as WGs were an important tool to informally move work forward.

Conclusion

135. The Committee agreed to request that the CAC encourage actions that favour the effective operation of committees and their eWG/pWG in the official languages of the Commission. The Committee also noted that several countries have stated that greater efforts are needed to ensure documents are available in the working languages of the Committee, well in advance of meetings.

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 11)¹²

136. The Committee recalled that the Commission at its 36th Session (2013) had appointed Costa Rica as Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean for its second term. Costa Rica, having served for two terms, four years by July 2015, would not be eligible for re-appointment. The Committee was invited to nominate a Coordinator for Latin America for appointment by the 38th Session of the Commission (2015).
137. The Committee thanked Costa Rica for its successful work as Coordinator of CCLAC during the 4 years of its term.
138. The Chairperson thanked all delegations for their support and encouraged them to continue to improve the integration of the region in particular as to the identification and consideration of cross-cutting issues relevant to the region. She also encouraged the delegations to participate actively in the work of the Committee on matters of importance for the region.

Conclusion

139. The Committee unanimously agreed to recommend to the 38th Session of the Commission that Chile be nominated for a first term as Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean. The Delegation of Chile accepted the nomination and expressed its commitment to the region to continue the work successfully carried out by Costa Rica.

¹¹ [CX/LAC 14/19/10](#); [CRD12](#) (El Salvador); [CRD13](#) (Dominican Republic)

¹² [CX/LAC 14/19/11](#)

OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda Item 12)¹³Biofortification in Codex

140. The Observer Organisation IFPRI informed the Committee that a proposal on new work on this topic would be discussed at the next session of the Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCNFSDU) and that comments from CCLAC members would be appreciated.

Conclusion

141. The Committee noted the progress made in discussions on biofortification and called on CCLAC members to continue support this topic at the CCNFSDU

Harmonisation of nutrition labelling

142. The Delegation of Costa Rica expressed its concern given the appearance of new forms for presenting nutritional information (e.g. front-of-pack labelling), which provided for different labelling depending on the final market and which aimed at making the information easier to understand to consumers to help them make informed decisions on issues such as non-communicable diseases, overweight and obesity. The Delegation was of the opinion that this created problems for exporting countries and harmonisation of these approaches should be sought through the Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) which had already harmonised the nutritional information to be provided.
143. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that the CCFL had indeed discussed the use of symbols to represent nutritional information in the context of the implementation of the WHO strategy on diet, physical activity and health, however the CCFL had recognised that no additional information had been put forward to justify new work on this and therefore had agreed to discontinue consideration of this question as a separate agenda item, with the understanding that any new proposals could always be put forward under "Other Business and Future Work"¹⁴.
144. The Delegation of Costa Rica invited member countries, who shared these concerns to submit a joint new work proposal to the CCFL with the intention of evaluating current systems for the presentation of information on labels that had emerged, so that harmonised options could be developed which could have a positive impact on the protection of consumer health while reducing technical barriers to trade.

Conclusion

145. The Committee noted the concern of Costa Rica, which was shared by the Delegations of Ecuador, El Salvador and Peru.

Member of CCEXEC for the Latin America and the Caribbean Region

146. The Delegation of Mexico informed the Committee of its intention to stand for the election as the member of the CCEXEC to be elected on a geographical basis for Latin America and the Caribbean at CAC38 in 2015, once Jamaica's term had expired.

Development of an international standard for quinoa

147. The Delegation of Bolivia informed the Committee that it was their intention to continue work on developing a Standard for Quinoa Grains, no longer at the regional level but internationally. The Committee was further informed that work was underway so a sound project document could be submitted to the CCEXEC for critical review. They expected to have analysis data in January 2015 and would then ask the region for support in improving the document and on how best to proceed in order to submit a proposal for approval at the CAC.
148. The observer delegation of the United States of America, speaking as host country for the Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL), which was presently adjourned, stated that they had no objection to a project document on quinoa being drafted for approval as new work by the CAC. Should the CAC approve new work they would as host country request that the work be carried out electronically as it would not be feasible or cost effective to re-open a committee for a physical meeting for a single item.
149. Several delegations expressed their support for the proposal to develop this standard.

¹³ [CRD5](#) (Chile and Paraguay); [CRD9](#) (Costa Rica); [CRD14](#) (Colombia and Ecuador); [CRD16](#) (Belize)

¹⁴ [REP11/FL, para 66](#)

Conclusion

150. The Committee agreed to support new work for an international standard for quinoa grains. The Committee also noted the comment of the host country of the CCCPL (United States of America), that if CAC should approve the new work, the CCCPL would work electronically.

Guide for data generation to perform the exposure assessment to cadmium in cocoa bean and cocoa based products

151. The Delegation of Ecuador presented the background to the guide and requested support so that the document, developed together with Colombia, could be made available to members of CCLAC as a guide document to be used via the CCLAC web site.
152. Several delegations expressed their support for this initiative.
153. The WHO Representative expressed appreciation for the efforts undertaken by Ecuador and Colombia to develop this guidance for countries to collect the relevant data. She called on countries for the data to be compiled and submitted through the Global Environment Monitoring System (GEMS/Food programme) in response to a call for data once the JECFA evaluation of cadmium in cocoa and cocoa products had been scheduled.
154. The Committee noted that the original title of the document as contained in CRD14 had been modified to better reflect the content of the document.

Conclusion

155. The Committee supported the document “Guide for data generation to perform the exposure assessment to cadmium in cocoa bean and cocoa based products” and confirmed that it should be made available to member countries as a guidance document for the region on the CCLAC webpage. The Committee also took note of the call to be made by WHO for a compilation of data for submission to JECFA.

Performance criteria for reference and confirmatory methods for marine biotoxins (section I-8.6 determination of biotoxins) in the Standard for Live and Raw Bivalve Mollusc (CODEX STAN 292-2008)

156. The Delegation of Chile informed the Committee that the 33rd Session of the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products had agreed with the criteria for the determination of biotoxins in section I.8.6.2 of the Standard and had sent them for endorsement by the 35th Session of the Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) and adoption by the 37th Session of the Commission.
157. The CCMAS had endorsed the mouse bioassay (AOAC 959.08) for the determination of saxitoxin or other paralytic shellfish toxins as Type IV whereas in different countries, the mouse bioassay was used as a Type III method for control, inspection and/or regulation purposes. The typification of the mouse bioassay as Type IV restricted its use in the control and inspection of hydrobiologic products hence having a negative impact on trade as the mouse bioassay method was widely used and efficient, and allowed for adequate protection of public health.
158. The CAC37 (2014) returned section I.8.6.2 of the Standard to CCMAS with a request to review the typing of the methods in question and encouraged member countries to submit information in order for CCMAS to take a decision on this matter.
159. The Delegation asked CCLAC members support to present a joint and solid defence on this issue at the next CCMAS, for which countries were requested to provide scientific data to provide technical support to the proposal to establish the method as Type III.
160. The Committee was informed that an informal meeting convened during the current session of CCLAC with the countries concerned, had developed a range of strategies to achieve their objectives as proposed by Chile.
161. Several delegations expressed support for this strategy and their commitment to provide more scientific data.

Conclusion

162. The Committee supported presenting a defence for the classification of the mouse bioassay method for determination of saxitoxin as a Type III method. In addition agreed to develop a strategy that included the following:
- Organising and holding a video conference between experts;
 - Organising and holding a CCLAC videoconference prior to CCMAS;

- Organising and holding an extraordinary meeting between the countries concerned attending CCMAS;
- Presenting a CRD in CCMAS containing the background and support of the interested countries;
- Seeking diplomatic representation in cases where delegates would not be attending CCMAS.

Concerns related to WTO/SPS-related private standards

163. The Delegation of Belize informed the Committee that SPS-related private standards continued to have a negative impact on their exports. Some of the concerns included increasing costs associated with certification; the difficulties with different schemes having conflicting requirements; in several instances the absence of science to justify some of the stricter requirements. The Delegation stated that the private sector called into question the relevance of food safety authorities as a number of importing countries did not require official food safety attestations. They also noted that governments were responsible for setting measures and should be guided by international standards where those exist. They indicated that it was the responsibility of governments to set the appropriate level of protection and not the private sector.
164. In summary, Belize encouraged the committee to reaffirm its previous recommendations on private and commercial standards made in 2012 and agree that they remain applicable (paragraph 170 of REP13/LAC); that FAO and the Codex Secretariat continue participation in the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) to provide influence in areas of harmonisation, consistency and application of science-based principles; and that member countries submit relevant comments on the 4th review of the implementation of the SPS agreement to the WTO/SPS Secretariat before the end of 2014 to allow the SPS Committee to continue its consideration of the specific trade concerns related to private standards and their effects on international trade.
165. The Codex Secretariat recalled that this issue had been discussed extensively by the Commission and that the Codex Secretariat had encouraged private standard setters to become Codex observers and that GFSI and the Safe Supply of Affordable Food Everywhere (SSAFE) had done so. The Secretariat as well as FAO and WHO had also assisted in meetings of the GFSI. He said further that it would be important to receive concrete examples and evidence where private standards had undermined a Codex standard so that these cases could be taken up with the private sector.
166. Several delegations expressed support for the proposal from the Delegation of Belize.

Conclusion

167. The Committee reiterated its 2012 recommendations on private standards, i.e:
- to express concern over the negative effects of private standards in developing countries and in international trade, and over the misleading of consumers;
 - to reaffirm that Codex standards are the guarantee to protect consumers' health and that the stricter requirements of private standards do not ensure "greater protection";
 - to reaffirm the need for a scientific basis for requirements regarding food;
 - to continue coordination with other relevant international organisations (for example the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE));
 - to continue a constructive dialogue with the non-governmental organisations imposing compliance with private standards;
 - to provide information and guidance to its members on this subject;
 - to propose to the Commission that it monitor the private standards that cause problems for exports from developing countries, and also establish an information system so that the causes of the problems can be quantified; and
 - to continue urging private standard-setting bodies to participate in Codex as observers.
168. The Committee also:
- urged CCLAC countries to submit information to the Codex Secretariat about specific cases where the negative impact of private standards on trade has been shown;
 - encouraged the FAO and the Codex Secretariat to continue their participation in GFSI;

- urged CCLAC members to submit their comments to the WTO/SPS Secretariat before the end of 2014, supporting the inclusion of a second recommendation on the draft document of the “4th Review of the Operation and Implementation of the SPS Agreement”, specifically under paragraph 14.20 which should allow the SPS Committee to continue its consideration of the specific trade concerns related to private standards and their effects on international trade.

Safety assessment and revised specification for steviol glycosides

169. The Delegation of Paraguay introduced the item and expressed its concern regarding a proposal submitted to the CCFA46 on the safety assessment and revision of specifications for steviol glycosides to (i) include rebaudioside M and rebaudioside E in addition to the nine rebaudiosides contained in the 2010 JECFA Specification for Steviol Glycosides and (ii) to delete the requirement for stevioside and/or rebaudioside A as the primary steviol glycosides in stevia preparations¹⁵ arguing that any combination of steviol glycosides can reach a purity level of 95%.
170. The Delegation noted that rebaudiosides M and E were found in trace amounts in stevia leaves. The proposal argued however that 95% purity could be reached from Rebaudioside M when the content of Rebaudioside M ranged between 0.01 and 0.08% in the leaves and could reach levels of 1% in leaf extracts. In the case of Rebaudioside E the content ranged between 0.03 and 0.4% in the leaves and could reach levels of 4% in leaf extracts.
171. Based on the above arguments, the Delegation noted that reaching such levels of purity may envisage the application of methods of synthesis or enzymatic modification as opposed to the natural extraction process of stevia extracts. In this regard, the Delegation further noted that the value of stevia as a novel food additive was based on their natural characteristics, as an alternative to chemical sweeteners. The Delegation was concerned that the condition of natural product may be at risk from the proposed amendment of the specification which could affect many producing countries, including those in the region that supported the production and marketing strategy of stevia as a natural sweetener.
172. The Delegation therefore requested CCLAC members to take into account and support this concern by participating in the CCFA session in 2015 where this matter would be addressed.
173. Several delegations expressed their support for the proposal.
174. The WHO Representative clarified that on the CCFA priority list there were currently two requests to JECFA for re-evaluation of stevia. These would be further discussed at the upcoming CCFA session and all available information on the different stevia extracts needed to be brought into the discussion, and then submitted to JECFA for evaluation in response to a call for data. Any need for further guidance on analytical methods and possible request to CCMAS needed to be decided after the JECFA assessment by CCFA.

Conclusion

175. The Committee took note and supported the concern expressed by the Delegation of Paraguay about the development that could occur with this topic. It also urged countries to take an active part in discussion at CCFA or to ensure they are represented by their diplomatic delegations.

Recent activities of the Chair of the CAC

176. The Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Mrs Awilo Ochieng Pernet, informed the committee about the activities that she had undertaken over the previous few months which included, among others, official visits to Codex members, speaking at international conferences and attending the sessions of the FAO/WHO regional coordinating committees which had been organised thus far (FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for North America and South West Pacific (CCNASWP), FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Europe (CCEURO), FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Asia (CCASIA) and FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC)).
177. The Chairperson indicated that she had seized each opportunity to raise awareness among relevant stakeholders about the importance of Codex food safety and quality work. She had also appealed to Codex members to look for innovative approaches in order to ensure sustainable funding for scientific advice to support Codex work and for the Codex Trust Fund and the Successor Initiative. The Chairperson invited the CCLAC members and observers to share best practices and innovative approaches to raise awareness amongst relevant stakeholder about the importance of Codex.
178. Delegations made the following suggestions:

¹⁵

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- Decentralise meetings and activities in member countries;
- Advocate for greater use of food safety certificates for health;
- Look for new stakeholders to communicate the existence of Codex, especially to communities;
- Develop a comprehensive communications strategy with traditional methods and smart devices;
- Create a brand identity for Codex;
- Build relationships across the regions and encourage participation of Codex representatives in Ministerial meetings including health and agriculture;
- Promote Conferences and technical expert meetings;
- Quantify the impact of Codex;
- Promote local initiatives in schools.

179. The Vice-Chairperson of the Commission Mr Guilherme da Costa thanked and expressed his appreciation for the excellent presentation of the Chairperson especially regarding work undertaken to raise awareness about Codex. He also shared information on his participation in two events in 2014 when he had presented and discussed the Codex Alimentarius work: one in Chile during a Codex colloquium and a second one in Brazil which was sponsored by the Latin America feed production sector with participation of officials from 11 LAC countries. On this event the Vice-Chairperson highlighted the importance of raising awareness in the private sector on the relevance of Codex for its work on feed safety and fair practices in trade.

180. The Codex Secretariat noted that Codex communication needed to be improved, as Codex was indeed in every home, through the products conforming to its standards, but that it remained largely unknown to the average consumer. The development of a comprehensive Codex Communication Strategy was a priority for the Codex Secretariat. The Secretariat would also continue working on its video and brochure project to show how the application of Codex standards had a direct impact on the life of people. He said that the communication strategy would include proposals for a visual identity that would be based on its name and the two very strong logos of the parent organisations FAO and WHO.

Conclusion

181. The Committee congratulated the Chair and Vice Chair of the CAC on their election and thanked the Chair for sharing the activities that had been carried out in Codex. The Committee also noted the ideas expressed by delegates of different countries on their Codex activities.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 13)

182. The Committee was informed that its 20th Session would be held in approximately two years' time and that more detailed arrangements would be communicated to member countries following the appointment of the Coordinator by the 38th Session of the Commission.

ANNEX
SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT MATTER	STEP	ACTION BY	DOCUMENT REFERENCE REP15/EURO
Proposed draft Regional Standard for Yacon	2/3	eWG (Peru and Belize) Comments 20 th CCLAC	Para. 58

APPENDIX I

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