

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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ALINORM 83/15

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION
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REPORT OF THE THIRD SESSION
OF THE
CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA
Colombo, Sri Lanka, 2-8 February 1982

INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia held its Third Session in Colombo from 2 to 8 February 1982 at the kind invitation of the Government of Sri Lanka. The meeting was chaired by the Coordinator for Asia, Prof. Amara Bhumiratana (Thailand) with Dr. Wickrema S. Weerasooria, Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne and Dr. Raja Ameresekere (Sri Lanka) acting as Co-Chairmen.

2. The Session was attended by representatives of 8 countries of the Asian region and by observers from 1 country outside the region and 3 international organizations. The list of participants including officers from FAO and WHO is contained in Appendix I to this report.

Inaugural address by the Minister of Colombo Hospitals and Family Health and opening of the session

3. Dr. W.S. Weerasooria, Secretary, Ministry of Plan Implementation on behalf of the Government of Sri Lanka welcomed the delegates and observers to the meeting stating that the Government of Sri Lanka was greatly honoured to have had the opportunity of hosting this very important meeting of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia. He referred to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in the area of international food trade which called for mobilization of the various resources in the field of food control services and food legislation in order to achieve the infrastructural framework to ensure fairness and to eliminate fraudulent practices in food. He invited the Minister of Colombo Hospitals and Family Health to formally open the meeting.

4. The Third Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia was formally opened with a speech by Hon. Dr. Ranjith Atapattu M.P., Minister for Colombo Hospitals and Family Health of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

5. While emphasizing that food was one of the basic needs of man the Honourable Dr. Ranjith Atapattu drew attention to the fact that it also served as a medium of transmission of disease in man. The latter needed more attention in the developing world and he stressed the great importance of providing food which is more nutritious and of better hygienic quality to the people and the role that international standards and food control regulations play in achieving this objective. The text of the keynote address is attached as Appendix II.

6. Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne, Secretary, Ministry of Agricultural Development and Research, Prof. Amara Bhumiratana, Coordinator for Asia, Dr. I. Ozorai, FAO Representative, Sri Lanka, Prof. R.R. Chaudhury, Acting WHO Representative, Sri Lanka and Mr. H.J. McNally of the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Secretariat who later addressed the participants, drew attention to the important role the Codex Alimentarius Commission was playing in: (i) setting food standards and regulating the use of food chemicals to benefit all the countries in the Asian region irrespective of the wide variation in their population density and wealth; (ii) protecting the consumer and ensuring fair trade practices; and (iii) in assisting in the task of achieving the objective of the attainment by all the people of the world by the year 2000 of a level of health that would permit them to lead an economically productive life. Dr. I. Ozorai and Prof. R.R. Chaudhury extended the thanks and appreciation of the Directors-General of the FAO and WHO to the Government of Sri Lanka for kindly hosting the meeting.

7. Dr. Raja Ameresekere proposed a vote of thanks.

Election of Co-Chairmen

8. The delegation of India, seconded by the delegation of Malaysia and Kuwait nominated (i) Dr. Wickrema S. Weerasooria, (2) Mr. Ranjan Wijeratne and (3) Dr. Raja Ameresekere all of Sri Lanka as Co-Chairmen of the session. The Committee unanimously agreed with this proposal.

Adoption of Agenda

9. The Committee adopted the provisional agenda (CX/ASIA 82/1) with a slight rearrangement in order of items to be discussed.

Progress made in the Adoption/Adaptation of the Model Food Law by the Countries of the Region of Asia

10. The Model Food Law had been considered and generally approved by the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Regional Conference for Asia, held at Bangkok in December 1975, by the First Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia in New Delhi in January 1978, and again by the Second Session of the Coordinating Committee held in Manila in March 1979. The countries of the region had been requested to adopt the Model Food Law or suitably adapt it to their legal systems, utilizing the general principles contained therein. The delegations present were invited to report verbally on the steps taken or contemplated in the near future to bring the national food legislation into line with the Model Food Law.

11. All the delegations reported considerable progress in the development of their national food legislation. Some of the countries had already established food laws which were in line with the principles contained in the Model Food Law. Some others had enacted new food laws, whilst still another group was now engaged in the drafting of new food legislation. Most of these laws were in line with the general principles presented in the Model Food Law. Food being a multidisciplinary subject, the food laws provided, for the establishment of Food Advisory Committees representing various interests. This approach was in line with the Model Food Law.

12. The observer from the International Organization of Consumers Union informed the meeting about a number of regional conferences held under its aegis to sensitize Governments regarding the need for an effective food law, based on the Model Food Law, and on establishing a network of correspondents to report on matters regarding food law implementation. The observer from Australia informed the Committee about the recent Uniform Food Act prepared at federal level. This act covered important provisions of the Model Food Law. This Australian Uniform Food Act was now being recommended to the individual States for adoption and one of the States, i.e. Queensland had already adopted the Act.

13. The Committee agreed that the Model Food Law should continue to serve as a guideline to Governments, and that the national authorities would be in the best position to decide how best to adapt it to their legal and constitutional set-up. The Law should be accompanied by detailed food regulations. Most of the countries represented at the meeting had such detailed regulations, while others were in the process of developing them.

14. It was recommended that, as necessary, FAO and WHO should continue to advise or assist the countries in the drafting of national food law and accompanying regulations.

Review of Acceptances of International Codex Standards by Countries of the Asian Region

15. The Committee noted that the Commission, at its 13th Session, had decided that acceptances of the International Codex Standards should be reviewed at the regional level by the Regional Coordinating Committees. The Committee was informed that the following countries in the Codex region of Asia had notified acceptance of one or more of the Codex standards or series of Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues: Arab Republic of Yemen, Bahrain, Democratic People's Republic of Yemen, Iran, Iraq, Japan, Jordan, Kuwait, Philippines, Singapore and Thailand.

16. The Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on General Principles had considered, at its 7th Session, the points made by the Coordinating Committee for Asia at its 2nd session. One major point was that Codex standards were too detailed in regard to secondary - or aesthetic - quality criteria and that as a result exporting countries which accept them would be placed at a disadvantage unless importing countries also accepted them. The other major point made was that it would facilitate acceptances if some parts of the standards (those containing secondary or aesthetic quality criteria) were made optional, whilst retaining a mandatory character for the other provisions, especially those relating to health protection. The conclusions regarding the above matters reached by the Codex Committee on General Principles are contained in paragraph 166 of the Report of the 14th Session of the Commission (ALINORM 81/39). These conclusions, which were endorsed by the Commission, were reproduced in document CX/ASIA 82/3. The conclusions did not support the viewpoint and proposals of the Coordinating Committee.

17. In introducing document CX/ASIA 82/3, referred to above, the Secretariat referred to the working paper entitled "Review of Content and Layout of the Codex Standards and Related Questions of General Acceptability of the Standards" (CX/GP 81/2), which had been prepared for the Codex Committee on General Principles, in order to enable it to consider fully the proposals of the Coordinating Committee. In particular, the Secretariat referred to the point in the paper that the amount and kind of detail in the standards varied with the products being considered, and that for certain products it might be held that the detail was necessary in the interest of consumer protection. The remedy, therefore, might be to examine the detail to see if it was acceptable, and if it was not, to put forward proposals for amendment, rather than to make the detail optional.

18. The Committee noted the conclusions of the Codex Committee on General Principles and the Commission on the above subject. The Committee reiterated the views and recommendations on this subject put forward at its last session and felt strongly that the whole question should be re-examined by the Commission at its 15th Session. To facilitate consideration of this subject, the delegation of India undertook to prepare a paper on the topic for the 15th session of the Commission.

19. There was discussion on the Codex Standard for Infant Formula (CAC/RS 72-1976). The delegation of Thailand stated that it was difficult for many countries in Asia to accept the standard, because the cost of an infant formula which met the requirements of the Codex standard would be too high in relation to incomes in many parts of the region. This view was shared by a number of delegations. The Secretariat pointed out that the standard was basically a nutritional standard which laid down nutritional parameters, but allowed various options so far as the composition of the product was concerned. The Secretariat suggested, therefore, that the possibility of manufacturing a product from indigenous materials at an

acceptable price, whilst still respecting the nutritional parameters of the international standard, might be looked into. The observer from Australia indicated that the Australian Dairy Corporation had offered to consider participating in a collaborative study to look into the question of developing an infant formula product based on indigenous materials. The representative of FAO referred to a study being carried out on this subject area in Africa with the aid of an FAO Consultant. Information on the study could also be made available at the next session. It was agreed that the delegation of Thailand, which had led the discussions on this topic, should prepare a paper outlining the problems for consideration by the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses at its next session. The high cost of infant formula was stated to be due mainly to high technology and packaging costs.

20. Discussion centred also on problems in accepting the Codex maximum limits for pesticide residues. A number of delegations stated that the limits were generally based on data from the temperate zones. The Secretariat drew attention to the fact that there was a Working Party within the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues devoted specially to the problems of developing countries. The Committee agreed that it was important for countries in the region of Asia to generate pesticide residue data from supervised trials and to make this data available to the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues. The Committee also agreed that delegations should bring the importance of this matter to the attention of their authorities.

21. On the subject of acceptance of Codex standards generally, the Committee wished to stress once again how important it was that importing countries, and in particular developed importing countries, should accept the international standards in order to further one of the aims of the work of the Commission - the facilitation of international trade. The Committee wished to bring this matter specifically to the attention of the Commission. The Committee noted from the Secretariat that more countries were considering permitting free circulation within their territorial jurisdictions of products which were in conformity with the standards, in cases where acceptance could not be given.

Matters of Interest arising from the 13th and 14th Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, Codex Committees and Related Activities

22. The Committee had before it document CX/ASIA 82/2 containing matters of interest to it.

Codex Alimentarius Commission, 13th Session (ALINORM 79/38)

Economic Impact Statements

23. The Committee was informed that the Commission, at its 13th Session, had amended the Procedure for the elaboration of Regional Codex Standards and Codex Maximum Limits for Pesticide Residues to provide for economic impact statements. These statements could be submitted at any Step of the Procedure and the Secretariat had been instructed to include an appropriate note in circular letters which requested Government comments on draft standards (paras 39-41, ALINORM 79/38).

Code of Ethics for the International Trade in Food

24. The Committee noted that the Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food had been adopted by the Commission at its 13th session (paras 120-122, ALINORM 79/38) and had been published by the Secretariat under reference CAC/RCP 20-1979. The Code had been developed because many countries - particularly developing countries - did not yet have adequate food control infrastructures to protect consumers against possible health hazards in food and against fraud. The Secretariat stated that it was the hope of the Commission that the Code of Ethics would be respected in international trade in food. The Committee was informed that the Secretariat had been asked to monitor periodically the extent to which the Code, was being implemented by the various countries and that a circular letter would soon be sent out in this connection.

25. In response to a query concerning footnote 2/ to Article 5.9 of the Code, headed "Foods for Infants and Children and other Vulnerable Groups", the Secretariat indicated that the reference in the footnote to a "Code of Ethics for the marketing and advertizing of infant food" was inserted at the time the Code was being adopted by the Commission at its 13th Session in December 1979, because several delegations thought that there should be some cross reference to the WHO/UNICEF Code which is now known as the Code on the marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes. The Committee was informed that both Codes recommend that foods for infants and children should be in accordance with Codex standards. It was noted that the footnote would need to be reviewed in due course. The Committee was informed by the FAO representative that the delegations should utilize such opportunities as sessions of the Regional Coordinating Committees for the purpose of information exchange (Article 9).

26. To a specific question raised by the delegation of Thailand regarding the sale in the developing world of pesticides not used in the exporting countries, the Secretariat informed the Committee that the question of the need for a Code of Ethics governing international trade in pesticides might well be raised at the next session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues. The observer from Australia brought to the attention of the Committee the relevant discussions on the subject at the 14th Session of the Commission (see paras 293-294, ALINORM 81/39).

27. The delegation of Sri Lanka stated that the Scientific Advisory Committee of the International Register of Potentially Toxic Chemicals (IRPTC) had noted that the need for international regulations concerning the trade in potentially toxic substances had been mentioned at the Governing Council Session by some member countries. They had requested the Director IRPTC to bring to the attention of the Executive Director of UNEP the need for the development of an International Code of Ethics for Trade in Chemicals which could include an international certificate containing toxicological information. The delegation of Sri Lanka suggested that if FAO was considering this matter, it should consider whether UNEP or IRPTC had already started work in this area.

Codex Alimentarius Commission, 14th Session (ALINORM 81/39)

Nutrition and the Work of the Commission

28. The Commission at its 14th Session had agreed that nutrition considerations had been well taken care of in the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and that the past and present work of the Commission had and was continuing to have a considerable nutrition impact. No radical change had therefore been considered necessary in the Commission's programme of work. The Committee noted that the Commission had given wider responsibility to the Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses for Nutrition in the work of the Commission and amended its terms of reference accordingly (see paras 115-121, ALINORM 81/39).

Review of Current Work Programme of the Commission and its Subsidiary Bodies and Direction of Future Activities

29. The Commission reviewed the activities of its subsidiary bodies and the general direction of its programmes of work and had decided to place increased emphasis on the needs and concerns of the developing countries. Two new Codex Committees had been established - the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products and the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins, which are of special interest to developing countries from the point of view of trade and nutrition. The terms of reference of the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products had been extended to include consideration of legumes and pulses.

30. In view of the Commission's decision to place increased emphasis on the needs and concerns of the developing countries and of the extended terms of reference of the Coordinating Committees in the area of food control as well as food standards, it was clear that the work of the Coordinating Committees must be regarded as essential to the interests of the developing countries in the Food Standards Programme. The Coordinating Committees for Africa, Asia and Latin America were proving to be very important fora for (i) highlighting food control

and food standards problems in the regions (ii) encouraging the exchange of technical cooperation in the region (TCDC), (iii) developing regional food standards where required and (iv) recommending the development of worldwide standards for products of interest to them moving in worldwide trade (see paras 122-134, ALINORM 81/39).

Hosting of Codex Sessions in Developing Countries

31. It was the general view at the 14th Session of the Commission that in principle every effort should be made to try and arrange to have a number of Codex Committees meet in developing countries to achieve increased participation by developing countries at the Codex Sessions (see paras 135-147, ALINORM 81/39). The Committee was informed that a positive step had been taken by Canada, which was seriously considering a proposal to hold the Third Session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins in Thailand.

Revision of the Procedure for the Elaboration of World-Wide and Regional Codex Standards

32. The Committee was informed of the changes in procedure, approved by the Commission, to expedite the elaboration of its standards (paras 159-165, ALINORM 81/39) and that this would be reflected in the Fifth Edition of the Procedural Manual. The Committee expressed satisfaction with the shortened procedure.

Consideration of the Draft Standards for Dates

33. The Committee noted that in the light of interventions by the delegations of Iraq, Saudi Arabia, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Cameroon and Egypt, the Commission had returned the draft standard for Dates to Step 6. The members of the Committee were urged to send their comments on the draft standard which would be discussed by the 16th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (paras 355-358, ALINORM 81/39).

Matters arising from the 15th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (ALINORM 81/20)

Proposed Amendment of Codex Standard for Canned Fruit Cocktail (CAC/RS 78-1976)

34. The Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia at its second session had proposed that the Codex Standard for Canned Fruit Cocktail be amended so as to allow the inclusion of tropical fruits in the list of fruits provided in the standard. A similar proposal had been made by the Coordinating Committee for Europe to allow inclusion of other fruits. This question had been referred to a Working Group of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables (paras 9-10 of ALINORM 81/20), comprising Australia, Federal Republic of Germany, Japan, South Africa, Thailand and the United States of America. and its report which the delegation of Australia had been asked to present would be discussed at the 16th Session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables.

35. The Observer from Australia informed the Committee of the various suggestions that the Working Group had made to accommodate the proposals of the Coordinating Committee. These suggestions had been sent out with a circular letter to have the views of member countries, which would then be discussed at the next session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables.

36. The Committee expressed the opinion that India being a producer and exporter of a wide variety of tropical fruits that could be utilized should be included as a member of the ad hoc Working Group set up to review the question of widening the variety of fruits that could be included in Canned Fruit Cocktail.

Recommended Standard for Tropical Fruit Salad (CAC/RS 99-1978)

37. The Committee noted that its proposal, made at its Second Session to amend the Recommended Standard for Tropical Fruit Salad, in order to allow this product to be designated by the alternative name "Tropical Fruit Cocktail" (para 110, ALINORM 79/15) had been referred

by the Commission, at its Thirteenth Session to the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables. That Committee had requested the same ad hoc Working Group which had been established to deal with Canned Fruit Cocktail (see para. 34) to deal with the question.

38. The observer from Australia informed the Committee of the various problems the Working Group had faced in trying to accommodate the proposal, and stated that the whole question would be discussed at the next (16th) session of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, based on the replies received in response to the circular letter that had been sent out (see para. 35).

Matters arising from the 14th Session of the Joint ECE/Codex Alimentarius Group of Experts on the Standardization of Fruit Juices (ALINORM 81/14, paras 45-52)

39. The Group of Experts, in considering a proposed draft standard for mango juice preserved exclusively by physical means (Appendix VII, ALINORM 79/14) had noted that there was some concern by a number of countries about calling a product "Mango Juice" which consisted of not less than 50% mango pulp plus added water. In view of the above concern, the Group of Experts had decided to hold the proposed draft standard for mango juice in abeyance until more information on mango juice and nectars was forthcoming from the Codex Coordinating Committees.

40. The delegation of India to the current session of the Coordinating Committee recalled that India had initiated the development of the standard for "Mango Juice" and pointed out that 65% of world production of mangoes was in India. Concerning the designation "Mango Juice" for this product, the delegation of India expressed strong concern that the panel of experts should not act in a way which would be contrary to Codex objectives and upset well established trade in the product known as "Mango Juice". The delegation of India agreed to provide to the Secretariat as soon as possible information on the amount of mango juice without added sugar that goes into international trade.

41. The Committee, reviewing the question, reiterated its earlier view that the product "Mango Juice" which contained 50% of mango pulp plus added water should be permitted to be traded under the name "Mango Juice" which was the traditional name under which the product had been sold by the producing country.

Matters arising from the Twelfth Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (ALINORM 81/24, paras 72, 170-177)

42. The Committee was informed that on the basis of replies to a questionnaire concerning the use of technical HCH, the 1978 Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues had strongly recommended that countries replace technical HCH by Lindane or alternative pesticides wherever possible.

43. The Committee noted that the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues through an ad hoc Working Group was paying particular attention to pesticide problems in developing countries and agreed that the Working Group provided the forum for discussion of its problems concerning pesticides. The recommendations of the Working Group, which were endorsed by the Committee, are given in Appendix V of ALINORM 81/24.

Matters arising from the Fourteenth Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives (ALINORM 81/24, paras 44-50)

44. Discussions on the rationale behind the use of food additives and the endorsement procedure resulted in the preparation by the Secretariat of "Guidelines for the Establishment of Food Additives Provisions in Codex Standards". The guidelines included in addition to other matters the sort of data that should be supplied to the Codex Committee on Food Additives by Codex Commodity Committees. The Committee was informed that comments sought on these guidelines would be discussed at the coming (15th) session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

Consideration of the Draft Standard for Food Grade Salt (ALINORM 79/38, paras 176-180)

45. The Committee noted that at its 13th Session the Commission had agreed that the draft standard for Food Grade Salt presently being elaborated by the Codex Committee on Food Additives (Appendix VII, ALINORM 81/12) should be referred to all the Coordinating Committees for consideration and comments. The delegation of India pointed out that the standard for Food Grade Salt contained a provision for sodium chloride content which should not be less than 97% and wished to know what the remaining 3% consisted of. The delegation further pointed out that their national legislation provided sodium chloride content of not less than 96% because any further purification will cause economic impacts while it does not pose a health hazard. The Secretariat informed the Indian delegation that its comment would be communicated for discussion at the next (15th) session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

46. The levels of contaminants in the standard for Food Grade Salt are acceptable to Thailand only for Table Salt. Other clauses in the standard are still under its consideration.

Matters arising from the First and Second Sessions of the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products (ALINORM 81/29 and ALINORM 81/29A)

Standard for Milled Rice

47. The Committee noted that the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products wished to have the views of the Coordinating Committee for Asia concerning the question of whether there was a need for an international Codex standard for milled rice. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products not to embark upon the development of a Codex standard for milled rice until such time as the interested countries of the region had an opportunity to study the ISO standard, when finalized.

Programme of Work of the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes

48. The Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes had decided to start work on the elaboration of world-wide standards for wheat flour, maize grains and whole and degermed maize meal and grits. On products including semolina and rolled oats, no final decision had been taken by that Committee and additional information in accordance with the work priorities criteria had been requested from Governments (CL 1981/22). A decision, however, had been taken not to commence work on the elaboration of codes of practice or standards for certain other products including wheat grains, rye and rye products, barley and barley products and oats.

Proposed Draft Standard for Wheat Flour

49. The Committee was informed that the Commission, at its Fourteenth Session, had adopted the above draft standard (ALINORM 81/29A, Appendix III) at Step 5 and had advanced it to Step 6 of the procedure. However, comments had been requested on Sections 2.1 and 3.1.1 from the Coordinating Committee for Asia. The Committee expressed its opinion that Section 2.1 - Product Definition, should be widened to include (i) Triticum durum desf, (ii) Triticum dicoccum stubl, and (iii) Triticum sphaerococcum perc.

50. The Committee noted that India and Thailand had a number of technical comments on the draft standard and suggested that they be communicated directly to the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products. The Committee considered that the Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products should not proceed too rapidly with the draft standard which was presently at Step 6, since it was incomplete.

51. The delegation of India informed the Committee of the importance of Durum wheat in the Indian diet and expressed its opinion that the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products should reconsider the clause in the standard "does not apply to Durum wheat". The scope of the section should be extended to include all recognized varieties. The Committee agreed to recommend to the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products that the draft standard for wheat flour should not be advanced to Step 8 for consideration by the Commission at its 15th Session, but rather hold it for further consideration at another session of the Committee.

Proposed Draft Standard for Maize Meal (ALINORM 81/29A, Appendix IV)

52. The delegation of India offered extensive comments of a technical nature on the draft standard for Maize Meal, but agreed to convey these directly to the Codex Committee on Cereals and Cereal Products.

Matters Arising from the Second Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia (ALINORM 79/15)

Specifications for OTS Tin Plate and Lacquers

53. Several developing countries in the region of Asia had drawn attention to the need for elaborating international standards for OTS tin plate and suitable lacquers, in order to reduce the leaching of metallic contaminants - especially tin and lead - into processed foods and to lessen complaints and rejections from foreign buyers which resulted in loss of export earnings. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat that ISO was active in this field, and through their Sub-Committee ISO/TC 17 SC/9 had elaborated a standard ISO/DP 4977/1, Double Reduced Electrolytic Tin Plate Part I - Sheet, which had reached an advanced stage and would be published as a draft international standard shortly. Work was also in hand on the revision of existing standards on cold reduced tin plate and cold reduced black plate (ISO/DP IIII, Parts I and II). The revised standards would be available by 1983.

54. The Committee was informed that, at the request of the Codex Secretariat, ISO/TC 35 "Paints and Varnishes" had established a Working Group 7 to elaborate specifications for lacquer for food containers. The Committee expressed appreciation of the action taken and looked forward to receiving a progress report on the work of this Group at its next session.

Assistance from UNIDO

55. The Committee noted that the Secretariat had made representations to UNIDO to consider the feasibility of convening a workshop for countries of the Asian region, with a view to developing cooperation amongst those countries for the manufacture of the right quality of tin plate from indigenous sources and other appropriate and cheaper packing materials. Interest had been shown by UNIDO, but the final work plan for holding a workshop in the Asian Region was still under discussions between FAO and UNIDO.

Levels of Tin in Canned Foods

56. The Committee noted that the tin content of canned food produced in the Asian region tended to be as high as 250 mg/kg a figure that has been only temporarily endorsed by the Codex Committee on Food Additives. The Committee expressed a fear that there would be problems in exports to European countries if the EEC regulations adopt a level of 150 mg/kg for the tin content in canned foods.

57. The observer from Australia informed the Committee that a Working Group of the Codex Committee on Fruits and Vegetables chaired by Australia is gathering data from different member countries on the tin and lead content of canned foods produced in the country in order to review the data and arrive at acceptable levels for the metallic contaminants in such foods. The data that has been so far collected is mostly from developed countries and the observer from Australia urged the countries in the Asian region to make available as much data as possible. Although data presently available showed a need for a 250 mg/kg tin level in only a relatively small range of canned foods, developing countries' production needs might not be adequately represented in the results. The Committee noted (see para. 105 of this report) that no evidence has been produced to the effect that a level of 250 mg/kg of tin posed a hazard to health.

58. The representative of FAO informed the Committee that FAO and WHO are preparing guidelines to ensure the reduction or prevention of contamination of canned foods with tin plate used for the cans. These guidelines will be available before the end of 1982.

Strengthening the Infrastructure for National Food Control System

59. The meeting had before it working documents CX/ASIA 82/4 and 82/5 providing information on recent developments with regard to assistance for food control efforts in the Asian region. Document CX/ASIA 82/4 in particular, updated the information on technical assistance projects implemented since the second session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia. The representative of FAO presented the list of activities of the two Organizations.

60. FAO and WHO had developed several manuals and guidelines which dealt with policy and strategy issues, as well as specific technical problems with regard to food control activities. These publications and some of the training aides in food quality control were available to the countries for utilization in the development of national programmes.

61. Information was provided on selected projects, particularly those which covered more than one country, such as the food contamination study for Asia and the Far East; national training courses for control of environmental contaminants in food; food inspection training course for Arab-speaking countries, and on the proposed Regional Workshops on improved food handling and on food safety and hygiene.

62. The attention of the Committee was drawn to the regional action programme for strengthening food control training and assistance recommended by the FAO/UNDP Technical Consultation among Developing Countries of Asia and the Pacific on Food Control Needs and Means, held in Manila in September 1979. This action programme gave highest priority to manpower development and to information exchange amongst the developing countries of the region. The Consultation had recommended that FAO, in collaboration with the other agencies as appropriate (WHO, UNEP), and with support of UNDP and donor agencies, should assist in the further development and implementation of the above regional action programme on food control. The Committee was informed that the activities for which resources had been identified to-date were entirely inadequate to ensure availability of trained personnel in areas of food quality control.

63. The specific attention of the Committee was also drawn to some of the national food quality control strategy workshops recently supported by FAO on its own or in conjunction with WHO. The purpose of such workshops was to develop an overall integrated food quality control strategy; to promote coordination amongst various ministries of the government concerned with food quality, safety and related matters, in particular the health and food and agriculture sectors; and to provide coherence amongst activities of various agencies at national level.

64. The Committee commended the work of FAO and WHO in providing technical assistance for strengthening and development of food control activities at national level. Development of food control infrastructure was, in fact, the main constraint in most of the developing countries, and no food law and standards could be implemented without such facilities. The need was, therefore, urgent. The Committee stressed the importance of this work and wanted it to be placed on the highest priority.

65. The FAO and WHO approach to promote food control as a developmental activity rather than only as a policing function was fully supported. To make optimum use of the existing national facilities, intersectoral coordination and cooperation at national level was considered essential. It was agreed that training should continue to receive a very high priority and special attention should also be paid to training in laboratory instrument maintenance and repair. The delegations of the Philippines, India and Thailand offered the facilities of their institutions in providing training.

66. The Committee welcomed the organizations of national workshops to develop overall national policies and strategies to improve the food system through better hygiene and sanitation, improved food handling practices, health and nutrition education and effective implementation of national food legislation for protection of the consumers and food supplies.

67. The delegation of Kuwait stated that FAO and WHO might consider the organization of the proposed food inspection training course for Arab-speaking countries in Kuwait where adequate facilities could be made available. The delegation of India offered the facilities of CSIO, Chandigarh, for training in instrument repair and maintenance.

68. Several delegations pointed out that certain types of technical assistance projects which involved equipment for laboratories and training, such as food contamination study projects, necessarily had a long gestation period. Enough time should, therefore, be given to the countries to complete the work started under such projects which need not necessarily mean provision of extra resources.

69. The Committee generally welcomed the TCDC approach to technical assistance in food control areas. The role of the Regional Codex Coordinating Committee in this regard was supported. Because of the vastness of the Asian region, workshops and seminars and the establishment of a network of institutions might have to be organized on sub-regional basis.

70. The delegation of Japan provided information to the Committee with regard to training of personnel from developing countries in import-export food inspection. As the Asian region consisted of both developed and developing countries, further cooperation amongst them in this area would be very desirable.

71. The Committee regretted inadequate support from UNDP to projects in the area of food quality and safety and very strongly recommended that more resources should flow from the UNDP to ensure quality and safety of foods and for the general improvement of the food system. This was essential for the protection of the health and economic interests of the population as well as for the overall development of the national economy. A suggestion was made that instead of a regional TCDC project, consideration should be given to the development of a series of national projects in which provision could be made for setting aside 20% to 30% of seats for training of personnel from neighbouring countries.

72. The availability of resources from the UNDP as well as other donor agencies depended upon the priority attached to these activities by the national authority. It was, therefore, necessary that the Governments should give high priority to food control in their national plans and programmes. Effective implementation of food quality control activities depended upon the political will at the national level and determination of authorities to ensure effective action, monitoring and surveillance, policing and above all, extension and developmental action, at various levels in the food production and distribution chain. The countries were requested to give this matter serious consideration.

Report on Activities within FAO and WHO Complementary to the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Subsidiary Committees

73. In introducing document CX/ASIA 82/6, the representative of WHO on behalf of the Secretariat pointed out that besides supporting the Joint FAO/WHO Codex Alimentarius Commission, both Organizations had several activities which were of additional direct or indirect support to the work of the Commission.

74. A pre-requisite to the work of the Codex Committees on Food Additives and Pesticide Residues was, for instance, the work of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives and of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting of Experts on Pesticide Residues, respectively. Both expert groups had the task of toxicological evaluation of food additives (including some contaminants as as lead, cadmium and mercury) and of pesticide residues in food. This toxicological evaluation led, as a rule, to the formulation of acceptable daily intakes (ADIs) which, in fact, were the scientific basis for the formulation of maximum levels (MLs) for food additives and

maximum residue limits (MRLs) for pesticide residues in various foodstuffs by the respective Codex Committees. This represented a substantial investment in providing background information and recommendations for action in countries that would not otherwise have direct access to advise at a similar level.

75. The same was also true for the work of the Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee on Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food. This Committee had, inter alia, considered the results of toxicological, microbiological and nutritional studies on irradiated food and, had at its sessions in 1980, concluded that:

- (i) the irradiation of food should rather be considered as a process (like heat treatment, freezing) than as a food additive;
- (ii) food irradiated up to an overall average range of 10 KG'y should be considered acceptable from a toxicological point of view; and
- (iii) that irradiation of food up to 10 KG'y should not introduce special microbiological and nutritional problems (for details see WHO Technical Report Series 659).

76. As a follow-up to these conclusions, the Codex Alimentarius Commission (1981) decided to set in motion the amendment procedure in connection with the General Standard and Code of Practice Relating to Irradiated Food (CAC/RS 106-1979 and CAC/RCP 19-1979).

77. The Joint FAO/WHO Food and Animal Feed Contamination Monitoring Programme was started in 1976 to implement a recommendation of the UN Conference on the Human Environment. When the programme was set up, national laboratories carrying out monitoring activities were identified and designated as FAO/WHO Collaborating Centers. Most of these Collaborating Centers were from developed countries. The monitoring data so far received from the Collaborating Centers had been reviewed by the Second Technical Advisory Committee, and several recommendations had been made. Some of them are as follows. Member States of FAO and WHO - particularly developing countries - should be informed of this monitoring programme. A special effort should be made to identify laboratories in developing countries which could benefit from association with the programme, even though full scale national food contamination monitoring was not being carried out. Some of the outputs of the programme, possibly of special interest to developing countries, were the analytical quality assurance activities and publications such as the 'Guidelines for Establishing or Strengthening National Food Contamination Monitoring Programmes' (WHO/HCS/FCML 78.1).

78. Referring to the International Programme on Chemical Safety IPCS, the Committee was informed that so far ILO and UNEP had joined WHO in supporting this programme which intends to pool all internationally available resources for a concerted effort to evaluate the safety of chemicals in the human environment. Food additives, pesticides and their residues in food enjoy inter alia priority consideration under this programme. One of the components under the IPCS was the Environmental Health Criteria Programme whose objective it was to assess the existing information on the relationship between exposure to environmental pollutants and man's health. Several Environmental Health Criteria Documents covered chemicals which frequently entered the human body via food. These are the documents on mercury (1976), PCB's (1976), lead (1977), nitrites, nitrates and Nitroso compounds (1977), DDT (1979), mycotoxins (1979) and tin (1980). A final document on cadmium is expected to be published in due course.

79. Efforts were also made since 1979 to revise the 1971 International Standard for Drinking Water. It was expected that later this year the new Guidelines for Drinking Water Quality would be ready for publication. These guidelines would consist of three volumes. One dealt with maximum acceptable limits for various microbiological, organic and inorganic water constituents. The second dealt with information on the rationale used for arriving at the recommended limits. The third addressed itself to special aspects relevant to developing countries.

80. WHO's and UNICEF's endeavours to promote Breast Feeding and the International Drinking Water and Sanitation Decade were also mentioned with regard to their significant contributions to the reduction of food and/or water borne morbidity and mortality rates. In this way they had to be seen in the context of the Codex programme, which basically had, inter alia, the same objective. With regard to the steps which had been taken by member states to give effect to Resolution WHA 34.22 (International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes), the Secretariat requested the delegations to inform WHO Headquarters accordingly which, in turn, had been charged to monitor these activities. The Committee noted the above information with satisfaction and wished to be informed of any further developments at its next session.

Food Safety and Human Health

81. The purpose of the Conference Room Document on Food Safety and Human Health (CX/ASIA 82/7) was to outline the health consequences of contaminated, unsafe food. It was not only the lack of food which caused so much suffering, malnutrition and death among the people of developing countries; contaminated food also had grave detrimental effects upon human health. The WHO Expert Committee on the Role of the Health Sector in Food and Nutrition (see WHO Technical Report Series 667) held in 1981 had come to the conclusion that the main determining factor for the high prevalence of malnutrition in a given area or community was frequently not the lack of food at the family level, but rather an insanitary environment and the lack of personal hygiene. In addition to both these reasons, the consumption of contaminated food had to be considered, leading to foodborne diseases, particularly to acute diarrhoea. A balanced food intake would be ineffective where there was inadequate utilization of nutrients due to repeated episodes of diarrhoea or other infectious diseases. It was for these reasons that many scientists took the position that diarrhoea was more important in the etiology of malnutrition than any other disease. Diarrhoea, however, was mainly a food and/or water-borne condition, frequently associated with an insanitary environment and inadequate personal hygiene. WHO had estimated that about 5 million children die annually of diarrhoea in developing countries. Even in developed countries, where morbidity due to food and water-borne diseases was negligible, foodborne illnesses were the second largest cause of mortality. Due to lack of reliable statistical data, there was, at present, little information available on morbidity rates due to foodborne diseases in developing countries and on the public health significance of the synergistic action of foodborne diseases and malnutrition. It was probably safe to state that the currently available data in developing countries on morbidity and mortality rates due to foodborne diseases did not represent the true situation as they were based only on the reported outbreaks of so-called "food poisoning", a term which was rather ill-defined and the use of which was discouraged.

82. The WHO Programme for the Control of Diarrhoeal Diseases had undertaken a study in 1980 to review the data on this subject. From these data it had been estimated that in 1977 there were some 744 million to 1,000 million episodes of acute diarrhoea in children under the age of 5 years in Africa, Asia (excluding China) and Latin America. If one added to this figure the following points: (i) the unreported cases of diarrhoea in the global population over the age of 5, particularly among travellers, (ii) the fact that a great many of these episodes were foodborne, (iii) the additional factor of all those health effects which were not manifested by diarrhoea, and (iv) the vast economic losses and grave social consequences due to contaminated food, then the magnitude of the problem of contaminated, unsafe food could be gauged. In order for member states and WHO to reach their main social target, namely Health for All by the Year 2000 (H/2000), these effects had to be duly taken into account. The key to reaching this target was primary health care (PHC), and the promotion of (safe) food supply and proper nutrition was recognized as one of the eight essential elements with which PHC must concern itself.

83. It was true that with the elaboration of food standards and codes of hygienic practice, the Codex Alimentarius Commission was already contributing significantly to the promotion of a safe food supply. However, it was quite obvious that food safety contained many more facets, such as food control, control by industry itself health education and others, which had to be addressed in a concerted effort, in order to obtain safe food. For this purpose, in the current draft of the 7th General Programme of Work (1989), WHO had suggested a target that its food safety programme could aim at fostering national and international action so that by the end of 1989 more than 50% of the member states would have adopted policies, strategies and technology to ensure the safety of food for reducing foodborne morbidity and mortality and for improving the nutritional and hygienic quality of food. In order to reach this target, WHO was recommending to its Member States that they review their current activities relating to all aspects of food safety and that they assess the impact they have upon those consequences which are attributed to contaminated food. WHO could provide member states with an 'inventory' designed to help national authorities to carry out this review and assessment operation. The WHO representative concluded by stating that as a follow-up to this, member states might like to look into the possibility of organizing National Workshops on Food Safety, with the aim of elaborating a plan of action for improving the present situation, and in this way helping to reach the social target H/2000.

84. In the discussion of this topic, many delegations supported and underlined the views expressed in document CX/ASIA 82/7. It was pointed out that Health Education at the community level should address itself to the farmers who applied pesticides for plant protection on their crops and to teach them good agricultural practice.

85. The delegation of Sri Lanka drew the attention of the Committee to repeated episodes of diarrhoea in infants due to the unhygienic condition of the bottles used for infant feeding. In addition to this, poor quality plastic bottles were used for infant feeding, posing another threat to the infant's health. The delegation of Sri Lanka requested the Codex Alimentarius Commission to look into this problem. The Committee was informed that the Codex Committee on Food Additives would be looking into the whole problem of plastic materials coming into contact with food at its next session. In Sri Lanka 15 to 20% of all hospital admissions were due to bowel diseases, underlining the grave public health significance of contaminated food and water.

86. The delegation of Thailand pointed out that malnutrition was a multi-sectorial problem. This view was supported by the Committee.

87. The delegation of India foresaw Codex work in its future concerning itself with standards for fortified foods (e.g. iron, iodine, fortified salt) in order to further contribute to disease prevention.

88. The Committee requested FAO and WHO to cooperate with and provide reinforced financial assistance within the framework of their general budget to governments for development and improvement of integrated national food safety and food control programmes.

Food Irradiation

89. The Committee had before it document CX/ASIA 82/8. The Committee noted with interest the technological developments in food irradiation, which is a new and developing technology for preservation and decontamination of food and considered safe. In fact, the Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee on the Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food (JECFI) considering the total scientific evidence on the wholesomeness of irradiated food available in 1980, concluded that the irradiation of any food up to an average absorbed dose of 10 Kgy caused no toxicological hazard and hence toxicological testing of foods irradiated up to the dose mentioned above was no longer required.

90. To promote the world-wide introduction of food irradiation, it was necessary (i) to develop national legislation and regulatory procedures that would enhance confidence among trading nations and (ii) that foods irradiated in one country and offered for sale in another should have been subjected to commonly acceptable standards of wholesomeness, good manufacturing practice and irradiation control. To aid harmonization of national laws, the Codex Alimentarius Commission had adopted a Recommended International General Standard for Irradiated Foods (CAC/RS 106-1979) which had been distributed to the Member States of FAO and WHO. This standard and the Recommended International Code of Practice for the Operation of Radiation Facilities for the Treatment of Foods (CAC/RCP 19-1979) had meanwhile been amended, in the light of recommendations of the 1980 JECFI, and the amendments proposed by a Scientific Sub-Committee had now been sent to Governments for comments at Step 3 of the Codex Procedure for the Amendment of Standards. The Member States of the Asian region were urged to send their comments on the amendments which would be discussed at the 15th session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

91. The Committee was informed that the labelling section in the International Standard for Irradiated Foods which was under revision was still left blank and would be considered by the next session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

92. The delegation of Sri Lanka informed the Committee of the meeting of the RCA (Regional Cooperative Agreement for Research, Development and Training related to Nuclear Science and Technology) in Colombo in December 1980 to consider the Model Regulations for the Control of Trade in Irradiated Food.

93. This meeting was attended by Australia, India, Indonesia, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Sri Lanka and Thailand. Although the representatives at this meeting were informed by the Advisors of the thinking of the Joint FAO/WHO/IAEA Expert Committee on Food Irradiation which met in October 1980, that special labelling was not necessary for irradiated foods, the Committee concluded that control of trade in irradiated foods can be achieved by obligatory (mandatory) reference on the labelling of packages and in related commercial documentation to the fact that the food has been irradiated (Articles 17 and 18) with the possible addition of information reference to official control and explaining the beneficial purposes of the irradiation process (Article 9).

94. The Committee expressed the opinion that this information be brought to the attention of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling.

95. The Committee expressed the opinion that the adoption of the revised International Standard for Irradiated Foods inclusive of a decision concerning labelling may be expedited so that pilot plant production of Irradiated Foods could commence in those countries which are in a position to do so.

Consideration of Proposed Amendments to Certain Codex Standards

96. The Committee had before it document CX/ASIA 82/9. The Committee, at its Second Session, had proposed to the Commission at its Thirteenth Session, the amendment of certain standards which were of economic interest to a number of countries in the region of Asia. The Commission considered that the amendments would need to be formulated precisely and in detail before they could profitably be considered by the Codex Commodity Committees concerned, and returned them to the Committee for that purpose. On the basis of information supplied

by the consultant (Col. O.P. Kapur, India), the Secretariat had formulated proposed amendments which were set out in Appendix I of CX/ASIA 82/9.

97. The Secretariat explained the amendment procedure for Codex standards which had been adopted by the Commission at Step 8. The Committee noted that the decision whether or not to set the amendment procedure in motion rested with the Commission. The proposed amendments would, however, be brought to the attention of relevant Codex Commodity Committees meeting between now and the 15th Session of the Commission in July 1983, in order to enable the Commission to have the benefit of the opinion of the Commodity Committees concerned.

98. The Committee adopted the amendments shown in Appendix III and decided to submit them to the Commission at its 15th Session for consideration, with a view to setting the amendment procedure in motion, (excepting the amendments proposed to the General Standard for Edible Fats and Oils, which are being proposed only by India and Iraq). In the case of those amendments where it was proposed that parts of standards which were now mandatory should be made optional, the Committee was aware of the Commission's endorsement of the views which had been expressed by the Codex Committee on General Principles (ALINORM 81/39, para. 166). Nevertheless, taking into account that the delegation of India had been charged by the Committee with the task of preparing a paper on this subject for consideration by the 15th Session of the Commission (see para. 18) and taking into account the fact that most of the interested developing countries in the region had not been able to be represented at Committee sessions at the time the standards were elaborated, the Committee earnestly requested the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables to accept the amendments now being proposed for the consideration of the Commission notwithstanding the position which the Commission had taken on this matter at its 14th session. In this connection, the Committee also wished to bring to the attention of the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables, the importance of the economic aspects of these standards to various exporting countries in the region.

99. The standards for processed fruits and vegetables to which amendments were proposed were those for Canned Pineapple, Canned Fruit Cocktail, Canned Green Peas, Canned Mature Processed Peas, and Canned Mushrooms. Concerning 'styles' in the standard for Canned Pineapple, the observer from Australia recalled the discussions in the Codex Committee on General Principles and the conclusion that in considering whether to provide for styles in standards, regard should also be had to the Work Priorities Criteria, in order to determine whether there was a real need, in terms of importance in international trade, to provide for styles in the case of the products being considered. As regards the proposal to make the section on 'drained weight' optional, the observer from Australia cautioned against this in the standards for processed fruits and vegetables being looked at by the Committee. He sounded a similar note of caution concerning proposals to make various provisions on essential composition and quality criteria optional, stating that such matters could not be left for settlement between buyer and seller, but needed to be regulated by the authorities in the interest of consumer protection.

100. In response, it was stated that it would be alright for the provisions to be mandatory if countries - particularly importing countries - accepted them and implemented them as a basis for international trade, but exporting countries could not be expected to adjust their machinery and manufacturing practices to the standards in the absence of acceptance of the standards by the importing countries. This was not, however, to diminish in any way the value of the standards as a guide to industry, but at present it would be better to look

upon such detailed provisions as a good guide to acceptable international requirements. The Committee decided not to proceed with any amendments in the case of the standard for Canned Mushrooms.

101. Concerning the proposal to delete flavours and colours from the lists of food additives in the standards for processed fruits and vegetables mentioned above, the Secretariat explained the philosophy regarding the use of these additives, as discussed in the Codex Committee on Food Additives and as set out in the Guidelines for the Establishment of Food Additive Provisions on Codex Standards. The Committee based its decision to recommend the deletion of these additives on the view that they could be used to mask poor quality of the original material and thus deceive the consumer. As regards the standards for canned peas and mature processed peas, the delegation of Philippines preferred to retain the provision for colours in these standards because they could be a technological need for their use.

102. Concerning the standard for Canned Fruit Cocktail, the Committee agreed to propose the addition of three tropical fruits, as requested by the delegation of Malaysia. These were Passion Fruit, Carambola and Jack Fruit.

103. The Committee expressed the wish to see the temporary status of the endorsement of 250 mg/kg for tin changed to a full endorsement in the standards.

104. The standards for fruit juices to which amendments were proposed were those for Pineapple Juice, Apple Juice, and Grape Juice. Concerning the section headed "Organoleptic Properties" in these three standards, the Committee recognized that there could be a loss of volatile components during the process of concentration. This was the only circumstance in which the Committee could see a loss of volatiles. The Committee did not think that the way in which this particular provision in the standards had been drafted made it clear that the restoration of lost volatiles was permitted only under the circumstances mentioned above. The Committee proposed to amend the provision as follows to clarify the situation "Natural volatile - (name of the fruit) juice components may be restored to any - juice from which only if the natural volatile juice components have been / removed / lost during processing."

105. Concerning the provision for tin in the standard for Pineapple Juice and Apple Juice the Committee expressed the wish that the figure of 250 mg/kg for tin be accepted by the Group of Experts on Fruit Juices as a firm figure, and that it be fully endorsed by the Codex Committee on Food Additives. As regards the standard for Apple Juice, the Committee proposed that the level for tin be increased from 150 mg/kg to 250 mg/kg. In this connection, the Committee pointed out that the existing level of 150 mg/kg was too low for conditions in tropical climates and that, in any event, no evidence had been produced which would indicate that a level of 250 mg/kg posed a hazard to health. The Committee also wished to point out that the provisions of Codex Standards were intended to promote international trade and exports and not to be so restrictive as to possibly create difficulties for some exporting developing countries.

106. The Committee considered a proposed amendment to the standard for Canned Sardines. The Committee noted that the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products had already included the species Sardine Longiceps (Sp) in the standard which would be published shortly in its revised form. The Committee proposed that another species - Sardine Sardinella (Sp) be included in Section 2.1(a) of the standard. The Secretariat informed the Committee of the sort of data to be provided to the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products when proposing the inclusion of additional species standards. The delegations of India and Thailand

agreed to provide such information for inclusion of Sardine Sardinella in Section 2.1 of the standard.

107. The Committee considered the proposal to delete colours and flavours from the list of food additives in the General Standard for Edible Fats and Oils. The delegation of India had made this proposal in the first instance and the consultant to the second session of the Coordinating Committee had indicated that Iraq had made the same proposal. The observer from the International Federation of Margarine Manufacturers Association pointed out that in the provision for colours and flavours, there was a clause which indicated that their use was permitted as long as the added flavour or colour does not deceive or mislead the consumer by concealing damage or inferiority or by making the product to be greater than actual value. It was decided that proposed amendments to these two provisions of the standard (colours and flavours) be regarded as proposals of India and Iraq.

Labelling Provisions for Processed Meat Products with Regard to Islamic Religious Requirements

108. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat of the progress so far made on this subject since its Second Session held in Manila in 1979. The Working Group that Saudi Arabia had offered to convene to discuss the format and the specific labelling provisions for processed meat products with regard to Islamic religious requirements had not been convened pending completion of a study by the Islamic Centre in Brazil on Islamic rules and requirements governing the slaughter of animals.

109. The Saudi Arabian authorities had informed the Secretariat that when this study was completed, a decision could then be taken on whether the study, together with the "Instructions and prerequisites of slaughter according to Shariya of Islam" prepared by the Islamic Centre of Brazil, would suffice to meet the needs of the Islamic countries. The regulations prepared by the Islamic Centre of Brazil were considered adequate by Saudi Arabia and agreed with sound scientific methods for slaughtering and complete bleeding of slaughtered animals, in addition to conformity to rules of Islamic law.

110. The Islamic Centre in Brazil had been asked by Saudi Arabia to complete the study on the subject and to prepare a comprehensive report about (i) the kinds of animals permitted for lawful slaughter for Muslims by Islamic rules, and (ii) animal parts and gland tissues permitted by Islamic rules as edible parts for Muslims.

111. The Committee took note of the progress so far made and expressed its opinion that after the study in Brazil had been completed, the results of that study along with the instructions and prerequisites of slaughter according to Shariya of Islam be presented for discussion to its next session.

Proposal to develop Standards for Cola-based Drinks

112. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat of the present status of the proposal made by Pakistan to develop standards for Cola-based drinks at its last session. The subject had been brought to the attention of the 13th session of the Commission for discussion. The delegation of Canada had drawn the attention of the Commission to the fact that at one of its earlier sessions, the Commission had concluded that international standards for carbonated soft drinks were not necessary. Mention was also made of the fact that there was in existence a Codex Advisory List of Additives accepted for use in soft drinks.

113. Pakistan expressed its intention to raise the subject about the need for international standards for cola-based drinks again at the present session and hence it had been included in the agenda.

114. In the absence of a delegation from Pakistan at the session and any documentation on the subject from Pakistan, the Committee agreed not to pursue the subject further until such time as the matter might be raised again.

Date Marking of Prepackaged Foods - Progress Report on Development

115. The Committee had before it document CX/ASIA which set out the approaches by the various Codex Commodity Committees to date marking in relation to products being standardized by them. The document also contained in Appendix I "Guidelines for Date Marking of Pre-packaged Foods for the use of Codex Commodity Committees", which had been adopted by the Commission at its 14th session.

116. The Committee noted that the guidelines mentioned above could also be regarded as providing useful advice to governments. It was noted that most Codex Commodity Committees had favoured using the 'date of minimum durability' which was also the type of date marking to which, in the opinion of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling, first consideration should be given.

117. Several delegations indicated the legislative positions in their respective countries on this subject. The Committee noted that any country which had observations on the guidelines could send them to the Codex Committee on Food Labelling for consideration.

Filled Milk Report on Consideration of Question of Developing an International Standard for Filled Milk

118. The Committee had before it document CX/ASIA 82/12. The Committee noted that the subject "Elaboration of International Standards for Filled Milk" raised by the observer from IOCU at its last session had been discussed extensively both at the 18th and 19th sessions of the Joint FAO/WHO Committee of Government Experts on the Code of Principles concerning Milk and Milk Products.

119. The experts had felt that the use of the term 'Filled Milk' for such products obtained mainly by the substitution of milk constituents by non-milk constituents was misleading and had suggested the use of the term 'Imitation Milks' instead.

120. The experts had expressed concern that the elaboration of international standards for such products might encourage their manufacture, which, at present, was not permitted under the national legislation of a number of countries. The opinion of the Milk Committee was shared by several delegations from developing countries who, at the 12th session of the Commission, had stated that, in their opinion, work should not be undertaken at this stage on the development of international standards for 'Imitation Milk' (Filled Milk), and the Commission so decided.

121. The Committee learnt that Decision No. 6 which deals in general terms with compositional, hygienic and food additive aspects of imitation milk products would be discussed at the next session of the Milk Committee.

122. The Committee expressed the opinion that presently there was no need for the development of international standards for Imitation (Filled) Milk in the region, since there was no substantial international trade in the commodity. There was presently a limited market for the commodity in certain countries of the region and the Committee expressed the hope that Decision No. 6, which would constitute useful guidance in the preparation of Imitation (Filled) Milk would be promoted by the Milk Committee. The Committee also expressed the opinion that it was not in favour of the word "Imitation" for describing the product "Filled Milk" (see para. 119).

Consideration of Ways and Means of Improving Participation of Members of the Region in Codex Meetings

123. The Committee had an exchange of views on the above topic. The Committee was informed that the problem of how to increase participation of members of this and other regions in Codex work had been discussed on several occasions in recent years. The subject had been covered in a Secretariat paper which had been prepared for the Twelfth Session of the Commission (ALINORM 78/8, paras 57-66) and it had been discussed by the Coordinating Committee for Latin America at its 1st session held in December 1980 (ALINORM 81/31, paras 158 to 167). One aspect of the matter - the question of holding more Codex meetings in developing countries - had been discussed in depth by the Commission at its 14th session (ALINORM 81/39, paras 135-147).

124. During discussions in other fora, several reasons had been suggested for comparative lack of attendance of developing countries at Codex Committee meetings in general. These were:

- financial constraints;
- other commitments;
- lack of information on the benefits to be derived from the activities of the Codex Alimentarius Commission;
- agenda items which were not of interest to all countries;
- insufficient number of trained or technical personnel to contribute effectively, especially to matters discussed at Codex Commodity Committee meetings.

125. On the question of holding more Codex meetings in developing countries, the Committee noted with satisfaction that the possibility of holding the third session of the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins (Host Country: Canada) in Bangkok was being considered by the Canadian and Thai authorities. In response to a similar suggestion which had been made by the observer from Australia, the Secretariat indicated that a comprehensive circular letter (CL) would be issued shortly to developing countries, in order to ascertain what the possibilities would be, in terms of facilities available, etc. for hosting Codex sessions. Other important matters such as availability locally of interpreters, identification of subject matters of particular interest, etc. would also be covered in the CL.

126. A number of delegations suggested that FAO and WHO should try to make some financial provisions for helping the poorer developing countries to participate in Codex work. It was also suggested that perhaps FAO and WHO Regional Offices could assist in the holding of more Codex sessions in developing countries. The observer from Australia thought it

would be helpful if more Codex meetings could be scheduled to take place one after another in order to save on travel costs. The Secretariat indicated that a number of Codex meetings were, in fact, scheduled back to back but account had also to be taken of the possibilities open to host governments in this regard.

127. Particular attention was drawn to the need in many developing countries of the region for a more effective national mechanism for highlighting interest in and coordinating activities related to Codex work. The work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the benefits that could be derived from participating in it were still not fully understood in many developing countries. The establishment of a national Codex Alimentarius Committee would be an important step, not only to develop greater awareness of the work of the Commission, but also to organize and coordinate effective participation in the work of the Codex Committees of interest - particularly the Regional Coordinating Committee and the Commission itself. The Committee strongly endorsed the above points and stressed the importance of securing greater national recognition of Codex work.

128. Another point to which the Committee attached great importance was to ensure that Codex documentation was going to the right people. It was agreed that members of the region should review their national Codex Contact Points to ensure that the system of diffusion of Codex documents nationally from the Codex Contact Points was working well.

129. It was stressed that even if a country could not send a delegation to a Codex meeting, it should at least respond to circular letters (CLs) and send in its comments in writing, particularly on matters of importance to the country. The Committee noted that the Secretariat would do its utmost to secure greater attendance by developing countries in Codex Committee sessions.

Nomination of Coordinator

130. The delegation of India proposed the present Coordinator for Asia, Prof. Amara Bhumiratana (Thailand) to serve for a second term, from the end of the 15th to the end of the 16th session of the Commission. This proposal which was seconded by the delegations of Sri Lanka and Kuwait received the unanimous approval of the Committee.

Other Business

131. The Committee felt the urgent need for FAO to expedite the setting up of the regional network, ANTTAI, since such a network would be extremely useful to the Region.

Date and Place of the Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee

132. The Committee was informed that its next session would be held in Thailand at an acceptable time to the Host Government during the first half of 1984, subject to approval by the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Vote of Thanks to the Government of Sri Lanka

133. The Committee wished to place on record and to express to the Government of Sri Lanka its sincere appreciation of the Government's generosity in having kindly provided host facilities for the session. The Committee also wished to express its appreciation of the excellent arrangements for the session and for the very generous hospitality extended to delegates during the course of the session.

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Speech by

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OPENING CEREMONY

CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

Third Session

Colombo, 2-8 February 1982

Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall

Codex Coordinator for Asia and Members of the Codex Secretariat, Representatives of FAO and WHO, Sri Lanka, distinguished delegates, ladies and gentlemen.

It is indeed with some sense of pride that I participate in the inauguration of this Conference and I consider it an honour that the organisers of this Conference have done in choosing Sri Lanka as the venue for your deliberations. On behalf of the Government, I would like to extend a warm hand of greetings to all of you who have gathered here today.

We, in Asia have been obsessed for a long time about the quantity of food that our people receive. Self-sufficiency has been the dream of all the Governments in this part of the world. The dependence on fluctuating world markets to feed our people has been something we have tried hard to get away from. With increasing populations, sometimes defying planners, we have more and more to depend on food from other countries. Sri Lanka today is on the threshold of hopefully breaking through this barrier. And in the obsession of trying to get enough to feed our people, sometimes we have tended to forget about the quality of the food that is consumed by the masses. We all know that visitors from the West, when they come to our part of the world, are very worried about the first few days they spend with us, wondering whether the food would disagree. My Indian friends here would know that the cricket teams that periodically visit our countries have a perennial problem of battling with the vagaries of the stomach in response to the food that they have to eat. Now, this should be an eye-opener to us that for long periods of time, the people in the developed countries have been able to use foodstuffs of such refined qualities that even the slightest indulgence of the better quality foods in our part of the world seems to upset them. We know that the reverse is not so. When we go abroad to the West, we don't come across this problem. So, obviously, a lot has to be done in our part of the world. Since we are short of food and we are offered various package deals, we sometimes tend to overlook the possibility that this food may be below standard. Even recently in the newspapers we read of incidents of poisoning due to the use of contaminated cooking oil. How much of such incidents occur in our part of the world is sometimes difficult to analyze, because bowel disease is almost part and parcel of living in the Asian region. And as such, there is a very uphill task for us here to codify and formulate a programme of how we evaluate the food that is available to our people. We may set certain standards, and with the laboratory facilities that we are envisaging, we may be able to make some breakthrough. But again, we in Asia must remember that the food that we supply to our people in our eating houses also should conform to these standards. It is with this view that the law, that Dr. Wickrema Weerasooria mentioned was entered into the legislation. But from passing a law to implementing it, is again a big battle for us. However good our intentions may be, we always have the problem of the lack of trained personnel, we have the problem of age-old habits which

have to be overcome, we have the problem of educating the suppliers of food as to the dangers that they are exposing the population to. And as such it is a complex and complicated task that you have gathered here today to discuss. It is at the same time an all-important task. It has been said all over again in this country that 60% of all hospital admissions are due to suffering from bowel disease and from preventable diseases. Bowel disease is one of the biggest consumers of pharmaceuticals in Sri Lanka, and no doubt in the Asian region. Can we isolate the food standard problem alone? We have to think very seriously about the drinking water than is available to our people. This may not come within your purview. But at the same time, however careful we may be about the quality of the food we consume, if we do not ensure that at the same time we are able to supply clean, unpolluted water to the people, our efforts may not bring the results that we hope for. And as such we have to keep our minds open and we have to address our thinking to these problems. For the policy-makers, the people who plan for us, the people who think of the priorities and consider that for any programme to be successful, just looking at one aspect of the problem alone will not suffice. Clean food, nutritious food, clean water - these are some of the basic things which are sadly lacking in our part of the world. I do not wish to continue on this gloomy note, because we in Sri Lanka would like to be cheerful even in difficult circumstances. Today, in a world that is going through tremendous financial upheavels, Sri Lanka is in the middle of one of its agricultural and multi-sectorial programmes - the Mahaweli Project about which, I think, you will hear enough, and too much probably. One aspect of Sri Lankan life is that whatever problems we have, we have an ability to carry on with the task that we have set to ourselves, and short-term political kudos is not the only thing that we politicians think about.

In this country, we have a very democratic history in that with successive elections we have always changed governments. Every government, like the present Government, hopes that history will not repeat itself - that we would be returned to power at the next elections. But we do not focus our attention or our energies towards winning these so-called elections, because we feel that there is a greater task that is on our shoulders, and that is to set our country on the correct path in every possible aspect - whether it be population programmes, whether it be food programmes, whether it be multi-purpose large-scale agricultural and other programmes. We think in terms of the long-term benefits that would accrue to our country and that at the turn of the century, we would be able to join hands with the more developed countries in the Asian region and stand shoulder to shoulder with the developed countries of the world. It is with this hope that the people of this country have placed their faith in the vote for the last 50 years.

I hope that during these deliberations, you would be able to come forward with practical suggestions in keeping with the ethos of the Asian people, that you would be able to come forward with suggestions that are within our financial commitments and financial constraints and I hope that you would be able to come forward with suggestions that would be of practical value to the poor people, the rural masses that live in the Asian region. I hope that while deliberating on these subjects, you would also have a little time to look around our country, to meet some of our people - not only our secretaries and officials, but also the ordinary people of this country and exchange views with them, and I hope that you will take back fond memories of your visit in Sri Lanka. Thank you very much.

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY THE COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

Canned Pineapple (CAC/RS 42-1970, Rev. 1)

1.3 Styles

It is proposed that the introductory part should read as follows: "Canned pineapple may be packed in the under-mentioned styles. The length, width and thickness of the styles "spears or fingers", "tidbits", "chunks" and "diced or cubes", as described in sub-sections 1.3.6 to 1.3.9 below are not obligatory and are subject to mutual agreement between buyer and seller."

1.4 Types of Pack

It is proposed that the introductory part should read as follows: "Canned pineapple may be packed in the under-mentioned types of pack. The types of pack referred to in sub-section 1.4.1 to 1.4.3 are not obligatory and are subject to mutual agreement between buyer and seller."

2.2 Quality Criteria

Insert an introductory provision as follows: "The different sub-sections 2.2.1 - Definition of Defects, 2.2.5 - Uniformity of Size and Shape, 2.2.5.6 - Cubes or Diced, 2.2.6 - Allowances for Defects, 2.2.7 - Classification of Defectives, and 2.2.8 - Acceptance, are not obligatory and are subject to agreement between buyer and seller."

3. Food Additives

Delete flavours (3.1) from the list of additives.

4. Contaminants

The Committee expressed the wish to have the endorsement status for the provision on tin (250 mg/kg) changed from "temporarily endorsed" to "endorsed". The Committee recognized that this was a matter which fell within the competence of the Codex Committee on Food Additives.

6. Weights and Measures

Insert an introductory provision as follows: "The provisions on weights and measures of this section are not obligatory and are subject to agreement between buyer and seller."

Canned Fruit Cocktail (CAC/RS 78-1976)

1.1 Product Definition

Add in 1.1(a) the following tropical fruits:

- Any variety of the species Carica papaya L. peeled and diced.
- Water melon - Any variety of the species Citrullus vulgaris peeled and diced.
- Rambutan - Any variety of the species, Nephelium lappaceum L. whole or broken segments.
- Banana - Cultivated edible species of Musa peeled and diced.
- Guava - Any variety of the species, Psidium guajava L. sliced or diced.
- Mango - Any variety of the species Mangifera indica L. pitted, sliced or diced.

Passion Fruit - Cultivated edible species of Passiflora.

Carambola - Auerrhoa carambola.

Jack Fruit - Artocarpus integrifolia L.

2. Essential Composition and Quality Factors

Insert an introductory provision as follows: "The different sub-sections 2.2 - Formulation, 2.2.2 - Packing media, 2.3 - Sizes and shapes of fruits, 2.4.4 - Defects and allowances, 2.4.5 - Classification of defectives, and 2.4.6 - Lot acceptance are not obligatory and are subject to agreement between buyer and seller."

3. Food Additives

Delete flavours (3.2) from the list of additives.

4. Contaminants

Same observations as in case of standard for Canned Pineapple.

6. Weights and Measures

Same amendment proposed as in case of standard for Canned Pineapple.

Canned Peas (CAC/RS 58-1972)

3. Food Additives

Delete colours (3.3) from the list of additives.

4. Contaminants

Same observations as in the case of standard for Canned Pineapple.

Canned Mature Processed Peas (CAC/RS 81-1976)

3. Food Additives

Delete colours (3.3) and flavours (3.4) from the list of additives.

Pineapple Juice (CAC/RS 85-1976)

2.4 Organoleptic Properties

Amend the second sentence to read as follows: "Natural volatile pineapple juice components may be restored to any pineapple juice from which only if the natural volatile pineapple juice components have been / removed / lost during processing."

4. Contaminants

Same observations as in case of standard for Canned Pineapple.

Canned Apple Juice (CAC/RS 48-1971)

2.4 Organoleptic Properties

Similar amendment proposed as in case of standard for Pineapple Juice.

Contaminants

It is proposed to increase the maximum level for tin from 150 mg/kg to 250 mg/kg.

Canned Grape Juice (CAC/RS 82-1976)

2.5 Organoleptic Properties

Similar amendment proposed as in case of standard for Pineapple Juice.

Contaminants

Similar observation as in case of standard for Apple Juice.

Canned Sardines (CAC/RS 94-1978)

2.1 Product Definition

Add in 2.1(a) the species Sardine Sardinella (sp).

AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY INDIA AND IRAQ

General Standard for Edible Fats and Oils (CAC/RS 19-1969)

4. Food Additives

Delete colours (4.1) and flavours (4.2).
