

# codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE  
ORGANIZATION  
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH  
ORGANIZATION

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**ALINORM 01/15**

**JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME  
CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION  
Twenty-Fourth Session  
Geneva, 2 - 7 July 2001**

**REPORT OF THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE  
CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA  
Chiang Mai, Thailand, 23 - 26 November 1999**

Note: This report includes Codex Circular Letter CL 1999/33-ASIA.

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CX 3/10.2

CL 1999/33-ASIA  
December 1999

TO: - Codex Contact Points  
- Participants at the Twelfth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia  
- Interested International Organizations

FROM: Secretary, Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, FAO  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy

SUBJECT: **DISTRIBUTION OF THE REPORT OF THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE CODEX  
COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA (ALINORM 01/15)**

The report of the Twelfth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia will be considered by the 47th Session of the Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, 28 - 30 June 2000) and 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, 2 - 7 July 2001).

**PART A: MATTERS FOR ADOPTION BY THE 47TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE  
COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AT STEP 5  
OF THE CODEX PROCEDURE**

1. **Proposed Draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products (ALINORM 01/15, Appendix II)**

Governments wishing to propose amendments or to submit comments regarding the implications which the Proposed Draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products or any provisions thereof may have for their economic interests should do so in writing in conformity with the Uniform Procedure for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts (at Step 5)(*Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual*, Tenth Edition, pp. 20-21) to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy (fax, +39 06 5705 4593; e-mail, codex@fao.org), **not later than 25 May 2000**.

**PART B: MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 47TH SESSION OF THE  
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS  
COMMISSION**

1. **Discontinuation of the work on the Code of Hygienic Practice for Aqueous Coconut  
Products (ALINORM 01/15, paras 29-30)**

Governments wishing to comment on the proposed discontinuation should do so in writing to the Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission, FAO, Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00100 Rome, Italy (fax, +39 06 5705 4593; e-mail, codex@fao.org), **not later than 25 May 2000**.

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Twelfth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia reached the following conclusions:

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 24TH COMMISSION**

The Committee nominated Malaysia for appointment by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at its 24th Session as the next Codex Coordinator for Asia (para. 96)

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 47TH EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

The Committee:

- Recommended the adoption at Step 5 of the Proposed Draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products (paras 16-28);
- Recommended that Codex worldwide standards be elaborated for the following:
  - Evaporated Filled Milk (paras 31-36 );
  - Sweetened Condensed Filled Milks (paras 31-36);
  - Filled Milk Powders (paras 31-36); and
  - Instant Noodles (instant wheat and rice noodles prepared using pregelatinization and dehydration processes)(paras 10-15);
- Proposed that the work on the elaboration of a Code of Hygienic Practice for Aqueous Coconut Products should be discontinued as it was felt that the hygienic aspects of these products were well covered by the existing Codex recommendations, such as the General Principles of Food Hygiene and the Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods (paras 29-30).

### **MATTERS OF INTEREST TO THE COMMISSION**

The Committee:

- Exchanged information on food control and food safety issues, implementation of risk analysis, matters regarding mutual recognition and consumer involvement in the standard setting activities both at the national and Codex levels , and requested FAO and WHO further assistance in these areas (paras 37-95);
- Agreed to a number of recommendations to Member countries in relation to the above mentioned subjects (paras 66,.75, 76, 79, 80, 83 & 94); and
- Agreed to several recommendations to the Codex Alimentarius Commission as follows:
  - The Codex Alimentarius Commission should expedite the development of guidance on good agricultural practices, especially for those aspects not covered by other international organizations, so that Member countries can use it in producing safe and good quality primary products (para. 66);
  - Codex, FAO and WHO should be encouraged to develop simple and practical guidelines on microbiological risk analysis for Member countries, particularly for developing Member countries (para. 75); and
  - The Codex Alimentarius Commission should play an active role in promoting the multilateral arrangement on mutual recognition among Member countries (para 80);
- Requested the Codex Committee on General Principles to specify the responsibilities of Regional Representatives so as to clearly distinguish their duties from those of Coordinators (para. 105).

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## REPORT OF THE TWELFTH SESSION OF THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR ASIA

### INTRODUCTION

1. The Codex Coordinating Committee for Asia held its Twelfth Session in Chiang-Mai, Thailand, from 23 - 26 November 1999 at the kind invitation of the Government of the Kingdom of Thailand. The Session was chaired by Miss Kanya Sinsakul, Codex Coordinator for Asia and Secretary-General, Thai Industrial Standards Institute, Ministry of Industry. It was attended by participants from 15 Member countries, 4 Observer countries and 10 international organizations. A list of participants is attached to this report as Appendix I.

### OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr Amonrapun Nimanandth, Vice Governor of Chiang Mai Province welcomed the participants and wished success of the Session. Dr. Prem Nath, Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific of FAO also welcomed the participants on behalf of the Director-General of FAO. He stressed the importance of the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and described current activities of FAO in support of the Commission. The Committee was also addressed by Dr. Yasuyuki Sahara, representative from WHO. On behalf of the Director-General of WHO, he stated that WHO considers food safety as one of the most important public health issues and that WHO Executive Board in January 2000 would discuss future directions and role of WHO in food safety. Finally, Mr Thamnu Vasinonta, Deputy Permanent Secretary for Industry, opened the Session and wished successful discussions during the week.

### ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)<sup>1</sup>

3. The Committee **adopted** the Provisional Agenda with the understanding that the following matters would be discussed under the Agenda Item 12 "Other Business and Future Work":

- Composition of the Executive Committee;
- Need for Improved Cooperation and Interaction among Member Countries in Relation to the Work of Codex;
- Need for Consensus in Elaborating International Standards; and
- Special and Differential Treatment to Developing Countries.

4. The Committee **agreed** to discuss following matters under Agenda Item 8 "Implementation of Risk Analysis in the Region": Priority Issues to be Considered in Relation to the Risk Assessment of Microbiological Hazards in Food; Food Database Dietary Exposure; and Other Legitimate Factors and Precautionary Principles.

### ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRPERSON (Agenda Item 2)

5. The Committee **appointed** Mr. B.B. Pattanaik, India, as Vice-Chairperson.

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<sup>1</sup> CX/ASIA 99/1; see also Agenda Item 12 of this report.

## MATTERS ARISING FROM THE 23RD SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 3)

### (A) REPORT OF THE 23RD SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION<sup>2</sup>

6. The Committee noted the report made by the Secretariat on the major outcome of the 23rd Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission<sup>3</sup>.

7. The Delegation of India stated that there were discrepancies between the treatment of the levels of tin and lead in milk products at the 23rd Session of the Commission. It was clarified that there were no levels specified for tin in the Standards for milk products. Regarding the general maximum levels for tin and lead, India was requested to send its comments to the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants.

8. In response to the question on the follow-up to the adoption of the Asian Regional Guidelines for Codex Contact Points and National Codex Committees by the 23rd Session of the Commission, the Committee noted that all Codex recommendations were advisory in nature and that the text would be provided to countries when establishing Codex Contact Points and/or national Codex committees.

9. Regarding the *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology, the Committee was informed that the First Session of the Task Force was scheduled for 14 - 17 March 2000 in Tokyo, Japan, and that a Circular Letter requesting Member countries' views on the direction of the Task Force would soon be circulated. The Representative of WHO informed the Committee that FAO and WHO were planning to hold an expert consultation in this area to provide scientific advice to the Task Force.

### (B) FEASIBILITY OF ELABORATING A CODEX STANDARD FOR INSTANT NOODLES<sup>4</sup>

10. The Committee was informed that the Commission, at the 23rd Session, noted the inquiry of the Delegation of Japan, supported by that of Indonesia, about the possibility of reopening the Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes to develop a standard for instant noodles. The Commission agreed that this Committee should first examine the feasibility of such a Standard<sup>5</sup>. The Committee considered whether it was appropriate to recommend the Executive Committee to initiate work on the elaboration of a worldwide standard for instant noodles; and if so, what type of products should be covered by that standard.

11. The Delegation of Japan, supplemented by that of the Republic of Korea, presented the paper. The Delegation stressed the need for a standard for instant noodles due to: the continuous and sharp increase of the production and trade; spread of instant noodle products from East and Southeast Asia to other parts of the world; and existing discrepancies among national standards for instant noodles. This view was strongly supported by many other delegations.

12. The Committee exchanged views on the name of the standard and products to be covered. It was generally of the opinion that the name of the standard should not include local specific names, such as "ramen". Therefore the Committee **agreed** that the name of the standard should be "Codex Standard for Instant Noodles".

13. Some delegations stated that the scope of the standard should be broad to make the standard flexible and to accommodate any future development of products of this type; and a wide range of ingredients should be allowed for use. Some other delegations were of the opinion that the standard should cover only those noodles prepared mainly from wheat flour and treated with alkaline agents to improve texture. The Committee noted that currently the elaboration of standards of general nature was preferred in Codex to that of standards with limited scope.

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<sup>2</sup> CX/ASIA 99/2.

<sup>3</sup> 28 June – 3 July 1999, Rome, Italy.

<sup>4</sup> CRD 99/3, 99/3-Add.1 (CRD 1; comments from Indonesia), 99/3-Add.2 (CRD 4; comments from China and Thailand) and 99/3-Add.3 (CRD 16; comments from the Republic of Korea)

<sup>5</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 209.

14. The Committee also exchanged views on what was the meaning of the term “instant” or how to distinguish “instant noodles” from other noodles including the Italian type pasta. With the assistance of an informal working group, consisting of China, Indonesia, Japan, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, the Republic of Korea, Singapore and Thailand and chaired by Indonesia, the Committee **agreed** that the process of pregelatinization is characteristic and prerequisite for “instant noodles”. Since it was clarified that not only instant wheat noodles but also instant rice noodles were pregelatinized, the Committee **decided** to include both types of noodles and **agreed** on the following product definition:

“Instant noodle is a product prepared from wheat flour or rice flour as the main ingredient, with or without the addition of other ingredients. It may be treated by alkaline agents. It is characterized by the use of pregelatinization process and dehydration either by frying or by other methods.”

15. The Committee unanimously **agreed** to propose the elaboration of a Codex Worldwide Standard for Instant Noodles to cover those products specified above, subject to approval of the 47th Session of the Executive Committee. The Delegations of China, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, the Republic of Korea and Thailand expressed their willingness to undertake to draft a Propose Draft Standard for circulation for comment at Step 3. The Committee noted that the Executive Committee would decide to which Committee the work should be entrusted. The Committee welcomed any Member countries outside the Region that wished to join in the drafting.

#### **PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR AQUEOUS COCONUT PRODUCTS (Agenda Item 4)<sup>6</sup>**

16. The Committee recalled that the Executive Committee at its 43rd Session approved the elaboration of a standard for aqueous coconut products as new work in response to the proposal of the 10th Session of this Committee. The Committee at its 11th Session, after briefly considering the text prepared by Malaysia at Step 4, decided to return it to Step 3 for redrafting<sup>7</sup>. A new text redrafted by Malaysia was circulated for comments at Step 3<sup>8</sup>.

17. The Committee considered the Proposed Draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products at Step 4. As a basis of discussion, the Committee agreed to use the text contained in CX/ASIA 99/4-Add.1 which retains the same technical specifications as in the original text in CX/ASIA 99/4, except those already covered by the existing Codex general recommendations, but reformatted in the Codex standard format.

#### **Scope**

18. The Delegation of China stated that the contents of sweet and/or flavoured coconut beverages were different from the specifications in the Standard. It was clarified that the Standard covered only coconut milk and coconut cream products. The Committee **agreed** to insert the following sentence at the end of the Section:

”This standard does not cover sweetened and/or flavoured coconut beverages.”

#### **Essential Composition and Quality Factor**

19. The Committee **agreed** to include sodium caseinate in a new subsection on permitted ingredients.

20. On the question of whether or not the table in the subsection on composition contained quality factors and needed to be transferred to an annex, the Committee noted that for the purpose of the denomination of products, the specifications of these products should be in the body of the text. The Committee, however, **agreed** to amend values in the table according to the comments of Thailand (except for the fat content in skim coconut milk) and the proposal of the Delegation of India concerning the fat content in skim coconut milk to reflect the balance between the contents of total solids and fat.

<sup>6</sup> CX/ASIA 99/4, 99/4-Add.1 (Revised text), 99/4-Add.2 (CRD 10; comments from China), 99/4-Add.3 (CRD 13; comments from Thailand).

<sup>7</sup> ALINORM 99/15, paras 17-19.

<sup>8</sup> CX/ASIA 99/4.



21. Concerning the request to reduce the minimum pH for skim coconut milk from 5.9 to 5.5, the Committee noted that: this reduction would not be feasible for products undergoing sterilization; usually pH 6.2-6.4 would be resulted if good quality coconuts were used; and the minimum pH of 5.9 was necessary to ensure that the product was free from rancidity.

### **Food Additives**

22. The Committee **agreed** to insert the proposals of Thailand in the food additive provision. However, due to their late availability, the Committee **decided** to place them in square brackets for further consideration.

23. Concern was raised by the Delegation of Singapore on the need to use sodium benzoate since the product is pasteurized. The Committee was informed by the Delegation of Thailand that this use had already been included in the Draft Table of the General Standard for Food Additives.

### **Weight and Measures**

24. The Delegation of India stated that the minimum fill of 90% was not feasible for certain packages with extended shelf life.

### **Labelling**

25. The Committee **agreed** to delete the subsection on the labelling of nutritive values as it felt inappropriate to make it mandatory and the provision is well covered by the Codex Guidelines on Nutrition Labelling.

26. The Committee also **agreed** to delete the subsection on the declaration of the use of sulphur dioxide as the declaration of used food additives was stipulated in the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods and metabisulphite salts were now included in the list of food additives (see para. 22).

### **Annex**

27. The Committee agreed to include in an annex those provisions on the composition and labelling regarding the grading of coconut milk.

### Status of the Proposed Draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products

28. The Committee **agreed** to advance the Proposed Draft Standard to Step 5 for adoption by the 47th Session of the Executive Committee and further development by the Codex Committee on Processed Fruits and Vegetables. The amended text is attached to this report as Appendix II.

## **ELABORATION OF CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR AQUEOUS COCONUT PRODUCTS (Agenda Item 5)<sup>9</sup>**

29. The Committee recalled that the Executive Committee at its 43rd Session had approved the elaboration of a code of hygienic practice for aqueous coconut products as new work subject to consideration by the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene for advice on whether a specific code was required. The Committee at its last session briefly discussed the need for such a code. Some delegations supported the elaboration of a specific code of hygienic practice for aqueous coconut products but several others were of the opinion that there was no need for it as the products were well covered by the General Principles of Food Hygiene and the Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods. Due to the late availability of the document<sup>10</sup> the Committee at its last session decided to circulate the document to seek opinions on whether a specific code was necessary for aqueous coconut products<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> CL 1999/12-ASIA, Part E; CX/ASIA 99/5 (comments from Malaysia); and CX/ASIA 99/5-Add.1 (CRD2, comments from Thailand).

<sup>10</sup> CX/ASIA 97/4.

<sup>11</sup> ALINORM 99/15, para 20-22; CL 1999/12-ASIA.

30. The Committee **agreed** to propose to discontinue the work on the elaboration of the Code of Hygienic Practice for Aqueous Coconut Products as it was of the opinion that the hygienic aspects of aqueous coconut products were well covered by the above-mentioned Codex texts.

### **ELABORATION OF A STANDARD FOR PRODUCTS IN WHICH MILK COMPONENTS ARE SUBSTITUTED BY NON-MILK COMPONENTS (Agenda Item 6)<sup>12</sup>**

31. The Committee was informed that the Commission at its 23rd Session noted the reservations of Malaysia and other countries in Southeast Asia and Egypt on the Draft General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms in relation to restrictions of the use of dairy terms for those products in which the milk components had been wholly or partially substituted with non-milk components. While adopting the Draft General Standard as final text, the Commission requested the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products (CCMMP) to consider, as a matter of urgency, the necessity to elaborate a standard for these products, such as filled milk and derived products. Since these products appeared to be widespread in Asia, it also requested this Committee to consider this issue in parallel to the CCMMP<sup>13</sup>. While the Commission approved the initiation of work on this issue, it did not decide on the nature of a standard, worldwide or regional, the number of standards, or what products to be covered.

32. The Delegation of Thailand, supplemented by that of Malaysia, presented the paper. It was stated that filled milk and its products had a long history in Southeast Asia; they were important nutritional sources in developing countries; they provided greater choice to consumers; and offered greater market opportunities to milk components. These Delegations proposed that three Codex worldwide standards be elaborated to cover evaporated filled milks, sweetened and condensed filled milk and filled milk powder.

33. In response to the comments from China, it was clarified that the General Standard for the Use of Dairy Terms allowed the use of dairy terms for traditional products, such as coconut milk and peanut butter.

34. The Delegation of Japan requested that in order not to confuse or mislead those consumers not so familiar with filled milk products, additional word or phrases should appear on the label in accordance with Section 4.1.2 of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods to indicate that the product was not a milk product. The Delegation of India also stated that the label should carry information on the substitution and should indicate that the product was not milk. The Delegation of the Philippines pointed out that these products were prepared from skim milk and among milk components only milkfat was replaced by vegetable fat/oil.

35. Taking into consideration the international trade potential, the Committee **agreed** to report to the 47th Executive Committee that the following three worldwide standards should be elaborated:

- Codex Standard for Evaporated Filled Milk;
- Codex Standard for Sweetened Condensed Filled Milks; and
- Codex Standard for Filled Milk Powders.

The Delegations of Thailand and Malaysia offered to prepare the Proposed Draft Standards for comment at Step 3 pending approval of the Executive Committee.

36. The Delegation of Malaysia, referring to the decision of the 2nd Session of the CCMMP that filled milk fell outside of the Terms of Reference of that Committee, noted that if the Executive Committee felt it necessary to establish an ad hoc intergovernmental task force to undertake the work, Malaysia would be willing to host the task force.

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<sup>12</sup> CX/ASIA 99/6, CX/ASIA 99/6-Add.1 (CRD 11, comments from China).

<sup>13</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 83

**INFORMATION AND REPORTS ON FOOD CONTROL AND FOOD SAFETY ISSUES INCLUDING ACCEPTANCE OF CODEX STANDARDS (Agenda Item 7)****(A) REPORT ON FAO AND WHO ACTIVITIES IN THE REGION<sup>14</sup>**

37. The FAO Representative noted that there were a significant number of Joint FAO/WHO activities related to the needs of the member governments represented at this Session. Regarding food control and food safety issues, including acceptance of codex standards, it was noted that FAO and WHO collaborated on ten international consultations, meetings and conferences related to Codex food safety and quality matters since the 11th Session of the Committee in 1997. Specifically, FAO and WHO held consultations on risk communication, human vitamin and mineral requirements, and on risk assessment of microbiological hazards in foods. In collaboration with UNEP, an international conference was held on mycotoxins. Four meetings of the Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives were held. The 51st and 53rd JECFA meetings on food additives assessed over 500 food additives, including 435 flavoring agents and three contaminants, and considered allergenicity of peanut and soya bean oils. The 50th and 52nd JECFA reviewed 29 veterinary drugs. In addition, two meetings of the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues were held. A total of 45 pesticides were assessed.

38. The FAO Representative noted that the FAO work being carried out in many countries of Asia was important in relation to the WTO's SPS and TBT Agreements. In particular, FAO sponsored five global activities on food safety and quality matters including procedures for validation of analytical methods for food control purposes in collaboration with IAEA, an expert consultation on *Listeria* in fish products, an international food data conference and an international meeting on international trade beyond 2000.

39. On the regional level, FAO has undertaken many activities in Asia through its regular programmes as well as its field programmes. In particular, FAO carried out Technical Cooperation Projects in Thailand, India and Viet Nam. The objectives of these projects are to aid in improving food control infrastructures, provide training in food safety and quality control with special emphasis on Good Manufacturing Practices and Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points, and assist in developing food export inspection and certification systems to support food export in Member countries in Asia. In addition, workshops on science-based harmonization of food quality and safety measures and on risk analysis were jointly organized by FAO and the International Life Sciences Institute for Asian countries. FAO's Fisheries Division organized workshops and other training activities on HACCP-based systems for the fishery industry. Finally, it was noted that FAO held a regional seminar on street food development at the FAO Regional Office.

40. From these endeavours many recommendations, guidance documents and related texts have been prepared that will be acted upon by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, member governments and Expert Bodies. New initiatives and programmes coming from these accomplishments are expected to further advance the food safety and international trade objectives of Codex and Member countries within Asia.

41. The Representative of WHO reported the activities related to the Region. He also introduced scope of WHO's activities by categorizing them into three areas: 1) normative work, such as the work of JECFA/JMPR and a WHO Consultation on Strategy for implementing HACCP in Small and/or Less Developed Businesses, 2) surveillance of foodborne diseases and monitoring of hazards in foods; 3) technology transfer/technical assistance, such as organization of workshops/seminars and development of training manuals. Most of normative work were available through the WHO web site (<http://www.who.int/fsf>).

42. The Committee noted the WHO South-East Regional Office (SEARO) Consultation on the Development of a Strategic Plan for Food Safety in the region. The Consultation recommended Member Countries to follow the Ten Point Regional Strategy for Food Safety Improvement, which covers the area of food safety policies, food legislation, food control and inspection, analytical capacity,

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<sup>14</sup> CX/ASIA 99/7.

epidemiological system, establishing working relationship with the food industry and trade, establishing working relationships with food service providers and retailers, establishing effective relationship with consumers, education and training in food safety and research in food safety. The Committee also noted that the technical assistance to implement the Strategy to Member countries in the SEARO region was being undertaken. Further information on technical assistance in the individual countries can be obtained from the Regional Offices in India and Philippine, as well as from WHO's Headquarters.

43. In relation to the implementation of HACCP in countries in the Region, the Representative of WHO informed the Committee of the report of Joint FAO/WHO Consultation on the Role of Government Agencies in Assessing HACCP (WHO/FSF/FOS/98.5), which addresses the shift in the role of government agencies from traditional inspection method towards assessment of HACCP systems. He also informed that the report of the Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Study Group on High Dose Irradiation (WHO Technical Report Series No. 890) was recently finalized and put on the WHO web site.

44. The Committee appreciated the activities of FAO and WHO and expected further efforts of both organizations to improve the safety and quality of foods in the Region.

#### **(B) REPORTS BY MEMBER COUNTRIES<sup>15</sup>**

##### **Cambodia**

45. The present activities in food control focus mainly on the inspection, monitoring and sampling of the domestic foods on the market place and of the imported foods at the entry points. We based the above activities on risk-focused inspection and control (type of foods, form and condition of processing). More stringent measure on the implementation of the labelling requirements on prepacked food from all origin has been taken. More quality assurance measures have been taken in food processing premises, in food trade and by all people who handle and deal with food. Such measures include, for instance, proper training of personnel in areas as hygiene, appropriate cleaning and disinfection schedules as well as identifying those points in a process that are particularly critical for the safety of the food products.

46. The stage of applying the HACCP procedure and the Risk Assessment is still very far from being reached. Beside its strong will and interest to address the many challenges it is facing by actually channeling its scarce financial resources to strengthening this area. Cambodia modestly appeals to all donors for very needed technical and financial assistance to strengthen the efficiency and competency of its food control system.

##### **China<sup>16</sup>**

47. The Delegation of China informed the Committee that the Food Hygiene Law of the People's Republic of China was adopted in 1995, which replaced the Provisional Food Hygiene Law of 1982. A number of regulations have been issued since then to match with the law, such as the Regulation for Hygienic Control of Irradiated Food and the Regulation for Control of Health Food issued in 1996 by the Ministry of Health. The National Codex Committee has been re-organized and its working rules updated. A Codex Newsletter in Chinese on activities related to Codex has been issued and circulated since last year. A series of training, education and promotion programmes on food safety issue have been organized.

48. In order to meet Codex standards for agrifoods, the "Innovation project for Agriculture Standardization" has been founded in 1999, it focuses on improving the standards level of the quality and safety aspects for popular agrifoods.

49. In addition, some training courses on HACCP and quality control have been held in the last two years. More and more food enterprises realized the importance of HACCP and quality control in their

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<sup>15</sup> CX/ASIA 99/8 (information from Japan); CX/ASIA 99/8-Add.1 (CRD 5, information from China and Thailand); and CX/ASIA 99/8-Add.2 (CRD 14, additional information from Japan and information from the Republic of Korea)

<sup>16</sup> CX/ASIA 99/8-Add.1 (CRD 5)

food production. More than 1,000 food enterprises have established HACCP quality control system, and up to now 342 food enterprises passed HACCP audit by Chinese Government.

### **Indonesia**

50. So far Indonesia has successfully established law/government regulation related to food control and food safety as follows: Food Law No. 7/1996 (notified to the WTO); Consumer Protection Law No. 8/1999 (into force on April 20, 2000); Government Regulation No. 69/1999 on Food Labelling and Advertisement (effected for implementation on 21 July 2000); Technical Regulation on Maximum Residue Limit (MRL) and Other Contaminant No. 881/1996 (notified WTO); Technical Regulation on GMO for Food (Transgenic food)(still in process; will be completed during this month); a training course for awareness building in food safety and hygiene convened in cooperation with WHO/FAO and the elaboration on a “Master Plan for Food Control and Pilot Management Information System in Food Safety”; Government Regulation on Food Safety, Food Quality and Food Security as detailed description on Food Law mentioned (to be finalized soon).

51. In order to get better results in the acceptance of standards, guidelines and recommendations, recently Indonesia has successfully restructured its National Codex Committee. Through this new committee, better coordination among national institutions related to food safety would be achieved. Better coordination will make easier to formulate food control and food safety and its implementation.

### **Japan<sup>17</sup>**

52. The Delegation of Japan reported the current situations of the safety of agricultural products around the JCO Uranium processing plant that caused a nuclear accident in 30 September 1999. Japan also reported the recent results of total diet study that showed the total intake of dioxin from common diet (=2.0 pg TEQ/kg body weight) being below the level of TDI<sup>18</sup> (=4 pg TEQ/kg bw). The 20 years' trends in dioxins intake estimated from the deposited samples show a dramatically decreasing tendency. The HACCP in Japan was introduced to the national legislation in 1995 by amendment of the Food Sanitation Law. To promote implementation of HACCP in manufacturers of the relevant foods, Ministry of Health and Welfare (MOHW) has held training courses for the local government officials to enable them to make effective advice to the manufacturers for the implementation of HACCP.

53. The national guideline for evaluation of the safety of GM<sup>19</sup> foods was already established mostly based on the WHO/OECD guideline. Until now 22 GM foods have been judged to be safe according to the guideline. Although the applications for the food safety evaluation of GM foods are now just on a voluntary basis, the MOHW requested the Foods Safety Investigation Council to start discussing necessity of some legal obligation for this matters.

54. The Delegation of Japan also presented the labelling system on GMOs which was decided in August 1999. The system will be introduced in April 2000 with one year grace period until April 2001. The primary purpose of the labelling is to provide consumers the necessary information under the provision that the GMOs currently consumed have been assessed as safe. The Delegation also provided the classification of foods subject to labelling requirement based on the document circulated at the session.

### **Korea, Republic of<sup>20</sup>**

55. The Republic of Korea has carried out the monitoring on contaminants (residues of pesticides and veterinary drugs, heavy metals, nitrate, etc.) in or on food commodities and raw products since 1980s, which has been used as an important tool for monitoring our food safety. Based on these monitoring results and the establishment of Korean maximum residue limits, we could estimate the risk that may be posed to the public health and elaborate regulations and precautionary control measures to protect the consumer and producer, if necessary.

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<sup>17</sup> CX/ASIA 99/8 & 99/8-Add.2 (CRD 14).

<sup>18</sup> Tolerable Daily Intake

<sup>19</sup> Genetically modified.

<sup>20</sup> CX/ASIA 99/8-Add.2 (CRD 14).

**Malaysia**

56. In Malaysia, continuous efforts are being undertaken to strengthen the Food Quality Control Programme. Food handlers training is conducted on a privatisation basis and is accredited by the Ministry of Health. Currently, there are 54 Food Handler's Training Institutes. During the 16<sup>th</sup> Commonwealth Games held for the first time in Malaysia in September, 1998, the Ministry of Health was assigned with the challenging task to ensure the safety of food served by 7,978 food premises at six different Games venues. The contract to prepare and serve food to the athletes and Games officials was awarded to MAS Flight Kitchen with the specific requirement that HACCP be implemented. Training for all food handlers in the Games Village was made mandatory. Overall, a high quality control was maintained for food production, storage, transportation and serving. With the implementation of HACCP and stringent quality control measures, not a single food poisoning incidence was reported. For the export of fish and fish products to the EC and USA, HACCP certification is mandatory and is issued by the Ministry of Health as the competent authority. At the same time, the Ministry of Health is promoting HACCP amongst the food industries. A National HACCP Certification Scheme has been formulated. To ensure the effectiveness of the Scheme, a National Committee on HACCP has been established comprising of experts from the public and private sectors, the academia and relevant professional bodies.

57. In 1998, Codex work at the national level was further strengthened through the establishment of 16 National Codex Sub-Committees and a Codex Working Group on Food Biotechnology. Recently, the membership of the National Codex Committee was extended to include the professional bodies in addition to the public and private sectors, the consumers, the industry and academia.

**Nepal**

58. The dairy industries have been selected for the application of "Code of Practice" (integrated GMP-HACCP) so as to supply "coliform-free pasteurized milk." Industries complying with satisfactory results are awarded "Letter of Recognition" for their performance. Consumer groups are involved in formulation of standards. Food law and regulations are being updated in line with Codex standards as well as the WTO's SPS/TBT requirements. Cooperation and support of FAO/WHO/WTO is earnestly expected for strengthening Food Analytical Quality Assurance System, specially in human resource development in HACCP & Risk Analysis.

**Singapore**

59. Singapore places great importance on a proactive food safety surveillance program, covering all imported and locally manufactured food. The food industry in Singapore is required to adopt high standards of food hygiene and safety and encouraged to adopt the HACCP system and to automate where possible. Singapore's food laws and regulations are at present being reviewed to make them current and relevant, with consideration given to Codex's guidelines, standards and codes of practices.

**Thailand<sup>21</sup>**

60. Food control mechanisms are reviewed by concerned organizations and modified to international standard, for instance: the implementation of risk analysis, empowerment of technical competence for law enforcement, enhancing on Mutual Recognition Agreements, including harmonization of import-export and quarantine control for safe food production to ensure hygienic condition along the food chain. Several activities have been carried out, such as the adoption of Codex guidelines and codes of practice, issuing a new regulation, cooperation with trading partners.

**Australia**

61. The delegate from Australia referred to an information paper made available to members, outlining several developments of interest to the meeting. These developments included the Review of the Food Standards Code, Percentage Labelling, Mandatory Nutrition Labelling and Implementation of HACCP. In particular, he elaborated on the contentious issue of labelling of genetically modified foods which had been decided by Ministers. It was noted that at its meeting on 22 October 1999, Ministers

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<sup>21</sup> CX/ASIA 99/8-Add.1 (CRD 5).

agreed to delay final acceptance of the labelling proposed pending further public consultation and additional information on implementation and costs.

62. The delegate also informed of a number of regional activities including two APEC projects—the two workshops in the Food/Drug Interface and the two 3-week residential training course in the application of risk analysis to be conducted early in 2000.

#### **European Community (EC)**

63. The Observers from the EC referred to the re-structuring of the Commission services and the priority given to food safety by the new Commission president, Mr. Prodi. The Commission is conducting a wide ranging review of community legislation on food safety and expects to issue a policy paper on the subject in mid-December. Codex Members and Observer organizations are encouraged to comment on this paper.

64. Further information, including the texts of EC legislation, the scientific reports and risk assessments on which EC legislation is based and the reports of inspections made by the Commission Food and Veterinary Office, can be found on the European Union web site at: [www.europa.eu.int/](http://www.europa.eu.int/)

#### **International Life Sciences Institute (ILSI)**

65. ILSI, as a global scientific organization, has been contributing to develop/improve scientific knowledge and understanding on scientific issues in food safety, nutrition, health and environment. As a partner to FAO/WHO, ILSI has been co-sponsored several seminars, workshops, symposia and conferences in Asia regarding food safety, risk analysis, micronutrients, healthy aging, biotechnology, dietary guidelines, etc.. ILSI expressed its willingness to continue the activities in cooperation to FAO/WHO.

#### **(C) DISCUSSION BY THE COMMITTEE**

66. The Committee **agreed** that:

- All Asian countries should implement Codex recommendations throughout the food chain to improve food safety control.
- Member countries should improve their mechanisms for food safety control and harmonize them with the international standards and codes and recognize mutual recognition agreements with trading partners.
- The Codex Alimentarius Commission should expedite the development of guidance on good agricultural practices, especially for those aspects not covered by other international organizations, so that Member countries can use it in producing safe and good quality primary products.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION OF RISK ANALYSIS IN THE REGION (Agenda Item 8)<sup>22</sup>**

67. The Committee recalled that it had had this item since its 10th Session and that at the last session a proposal was made to exchange regularly information and experiences in implementing risk analysis as well as information on technical assistance in this area among Member countries.

68. The Committee noted that there were three recommendations of the Commission addressed to governments regarding: active participation of governments in Codex work and involvement of all interested parties, to the extent possible, in the formulation of national positions on a Codex matter; ensuring transparency and consideration of opinions of consumer and private sectors; and incorporation of risk analysis principles when establishing or updating national legislation on food safety.

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<sup>22</sup> CX/ASIA 99/9, 99/9-Add.1 (CRD 6; information from China and Thailand), and 99/9-Add.2 (CRD 15; information from Japan)

**REPORTS OF COUNTRIES****Japan<sup>23</sup>**

69. As follow-up activities to the recommendations of the 10th session of the Committee concerning risk analysis relevant to Asia, we established a working group on the Dietary Intake Survey Method in Asia and conducted a questionnaire survey to collect information of the current situations, problems and future plans for the food safety monitoring from the Member countries. Of eight countries that responded to two questionnaires, seven countries have conducted the government initiated nation-wide nutritional survey. However, only one country has utilized the nutritional survey data for estimating exposure of food contaminants, such as pesticide residues, and food additives. Difficulties and constraints faced with existing nutritional surveys which were pointed out were: 1) insufficient expertise in data collection, processing and analysis, 2) lack of manpower especially for data processing and analysis, 3) limitations with the present survey methods, 4) lack of enough funds. Three countries expressed necessity and importance of exchanging information and experiences among member countries. One country pointed out the necessity of continuous collaborative work for the purpose of harmonizing dietary survey methods in Asia through seminars or workshops specifically on methodological issues of dietary survey.

70. Japan has started to develop a system to assess food contaminants exposure by combining the National Nutrition Survey data and some other information sources of food consumption and responded to the request from the Codex committee on Pesticide Residues by submitting a database of 97.5 percentile daily intake of foods based on Codex food classifications for acute hazard exposure assessment. In the process of this work, we found that technical support from research institute is essential because the data handling and analytical methods are very complicated and different from those in usual nutritional surveys. And we found difficulties to re-classify each food item into the Codex food classifications because many major foods consumed in Japan do not match with commodities in the Codex food classification. To overcome such constraints we strongly feel the necessity for further study to develop methodological matters especially for food classification to utilize the dietary survey data to assess exposure of the food contaminants and for exchanging such technical experience among the member countries.

**Malaysia**

71. Malaysia has recently established the National Committee on Risk Analysis and 5 National Sub-Committee on Biological Assessment, Food Additives, Contaminants, Veterinary Drug Residues and Pesticide Residues, and Risk Communication. As an initial step, efforts are being undertaken to collate data from various sources at the national level.

72. Recently, an ASEAN Seminar and Workshop on Risk Assessment and Harmonization organized by ILSI and FAO in cooperation with the Ministry of Health Malaysia was held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from 3-5 November, 1999. The objectives of the seminar and workshop were to disseminate information on the use of risk analysis principles in risk-based food safety decision making, to emphasize and highlight the existing information and data sources for use in risk analysis process, to familiarize participants with the process of risk safety assessment through hands-on interactive case studies and to facilitate dialogue among the regulators from ASEAN Member Countries to bring food control standards into harmonization with Codex Standards. The workshop made several recommendations including information sharing to promote and facilitate harmonization to Codex Standards and implementation of risk analysis in the region.

**Thailand<sup>24</sup>**

73. Thailand tries to incorporate the risk analysis as recommended by Codex in the regulatory framework and implement the three areas of risk analysis.

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<sup>23</sup> CX/ASIA 99/9-Add.2 (CRD 15)

<sup>24</sup> CX/ASIA 99/9-Add.1 (CRD 6)



## DISCUSSION BY THE COMMITTEE

74. The Delegation of Malaysia proposed that the Committee should request that Japan continue its efforts to harmonise and coordinate activities in obtaining dietary intake data for countries in the Region. A phased approach could be undertaken, including harmonization of food classification system, utilisation of dietary data in risk assessment and dietary assessment methodologies, including data analysis.

75. Based on the proposals of Thailand and India the Committee agreed to the following recommendations for the successful implementation of risk analysis principles:

- Asian region should cooperate to design training programmes to increase greater understanding on the principle of risk analysis and to implement it in their food safety programmes; FAO and WHO should be requested to provide support in this exercise, in particular technical assistance.
- FAO and WHO should play the key role in providing guidance for the practical implementation of risk analysis principles, in particular risk assessment.
- Asian region should actively participate in the sessions of the Codex Committees on Pesticide Residues, Food Additives and Contaminants, Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Foods, and Food Hygiene to develop a harmonized approach to risk analysis, especially to dietary exposure assessment for chemicals in foods, taking into consideration the needs of developing countries in Asia. The assessment of contaminants by the CCFAC should be revised to use the 13 regional diets that would be used by the CCPR.
- Codex, FAO and WHO should be encouraged to develop simple and practical guidelines on microbiological risk analysis for Member countries, particularly for developing Member countries.
- Member countries should share information to promote and facilitate harmonization to Codex standards and implementation of risk analysis in the Region.
- Member countries confirmed the recommendation of the Commission that they should adopt organizational structures and procedures that assure transparency and that allow National Codex Committees to consider consumer and private sector opinions. Cooperation should be developed with the consumer and private sectors in risk communication.
- Risk analysis should be based on scientific data<sup>25</sup> and should take into consideration different risk tolerances in countries.
- Risk analysis should be implemented in a phased manner.

### **Priority Issues to be Considered in Relation to the Risk Assessment of Microbiological Hazards in Foods**

76. The Committee recognized that the risk assessment of microbiological risk was lagging behind that of chemical risk. The Representative of WHO reported that WHO had recognized the need for developing a practical methodology for microbiological risk assessment and that WHO, jointly with FAO, had held an initial consultation on the subject in March 1999. The report of this consultation as well as other information on microbiological risk assessment are available on the WHO web site. With advice from the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene, further consultations would be planned which would examine specific pathogens. The Committee **agreed** to the proposal of Thailand that in order to initiate discussion and to enhance the cooperation in the Region on this issue, Thailand would circulate a questionnaire it prepared to Member countries to collect information on priority issues to be considered in relation to risk assessment of microbiological hazards in foods.

### **Food Data Base for Dietary Exposure Assessment**

77. The Delegation of Thailand stressed the need for food intake data to perform exposure assessment. The Delegations of Japan<sup>26</sup> and the Republic of Korea reported their recent activities in the area of dietary intake survey.

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<sup>25</sup> See also Agenda Item 12, para 105.

<sup>26</sup> CX/ASIA 99/9-Add.2 (CRD 15).

78. The Representative of WHO informed the Committee of the “Guideline for Prediction of Dietary Intake of Pesticide Residues”<sup>27</sup> and the first International Total Dietary Study Workshop held in the USA in August 1999 under the framework of the GEMS/Food Programme. He stated that WHO would continue its technical support in this area.

79. The Committee **agreed** that:

- Member countries should need to build up the ability to perform comprehensive dietary exposure assessment;
- Member countries should cooperate to develop national data base on food intake; and
- Member countries should be encouraged to exchange information and experience by training, seminar and workshop among Asian countries. FAO and WHO and developed countries were requested to support these activities financially or by providing expert advice, model software and training courses.

### **Other Legitimate Factors and Precautionary Principle**

80. The Committee **agreed** that:

- The food consumption and environmental conditions of countries in Asia were generally similar and the exposure to hazards might not be so different. Therefore, Member countries should cooperate to improve practical approaches to risk analysis process. This would be a possible way for these countries to learn and understand what are “other factors and precautionary measures”.
- Member countries should follow Codex activities closely to ensure that other legitimate factors and the application of precautionary principle would not become barriers to trade, especially for developing countries.
- As comments were being requested by CL 1999/16-GP on the inclusion of precautionary principle within the working principles for risk analysis, Thailand and other interested Member countries should send written comments to the Secretary of the Commission by the middle of December.

### **MATTERS REGARDING MUTUAL RECOGNITION (Agenda Item 9)<sup>28</sup>**

81. The Delegation of Thailand presented the paper emphasizing the benefits of mutual recognition arrangement to trading partners and shared information on the progress so far made in the country. The Delegation mentioned that the success of the arrangement depended heavily upon an adequate and effective sanitary control infrastructure and therefore there was a need for technological transfer from developed countries to developing countries, and between importers and exporters. Thailand made a number of proposals.

82. The Delegation of Indonesia, fully supporting the Thai proposals, stated that duplicating efforts of international accreditation bodies and existing certification systems, such as ISO Guide 25, should be avoided. The Delegation invited Member countries to be actively involved in WTO’s work, especially in that of the TBT Committee.

83. Based on the proposals of Thailand, the Committee **agreed** that:

- The Codex Alimentarius Commission should play an active role in promoting the multilateral arrangement on mutual recognition among member countries;
- Member countries should actively participate in the elaboration of the guidelines for judgement of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with food inspection and certification system by the Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) in order to establish guidance for arrangement of mutual recognition ;
- Member countries should implement the Guidelines for the Development of Equivalence Agreements Regarding Food Imports and Export Inspection and Certification Systems<sup>29</sup> adopted

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<sup>27</sup> WHO/FSF/FOS 97/7 (1997).

<sup>28</sup> CX/ASIA 99/10 (CRD 7).

by the Commission when concluding their bilateral or multilateral arrangements on mutual recognition.

- CCASIA should request the Commission, FAO and WHO to seek assistance from the United Nation's specialized agencies to develop a concrete framework for technological transfer from developed countries to developing countries in the form of a joint programme for sustainable system.

### **CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING AT THE CODEX AND NATIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 10)<sup>30</sup>**

84. The Committee noted that the Codex Alimentarius Commission had discussed the involvement of consumers in the work of Codex at its 20th, 21st and 23rd Sessions. The Commission at its 23rd Session, after discussions, proposed that Regional Coordinating Committees should continue to take the opportunity to provide a forum for the exchange of experiences on the ways and means of developing consumer input into National Codex Committees and Contact Points. The recommendations of the Commission<sup>31</sup> were brought to the attention of the Committee.

85. The Observer from Consumers International (CI), referring to its comments<sup>32</sup>, emphasized the need to support and strengthen consumer participation in view of the increasing importance of Codex Standards in consumer health and global food trade. CI reported its activities aimed at enhancing the capability of consumer groups to participate in the work of Codex including a breakthrough Regional Training Workshop it organized in August 1999 in collaboration with the Government of Thailand. CI drew the attention of the Committee towards the findings of the CI Asia-Pacific Survey which highlighted the need for more effective mechanism for consumer inputs on food standards setting at national level. Specifically, it urged the members of the Committee to:

- Report to CCASIA on the progress in involving legitimate consumer organizations in their respective countries;
- Identify best practice and develop guidelines to enhance consumer participation in Codex at national level;
- Identify funds to support the participation of legitimate consumer organizations, especially in developing countries;
- Invite legitimate consumer organizations to seminars, training workshops, consultation and related activities at national, sub-regional, regional and international levels;
- For National Codex Committees to ask legitimate consumer organizations on measures for better consumer participation at national level; and
- For National Codex Committees to involve legitimate consumer organizations in disseminating information on food safety issues at national level as a capacity building activity.

86. The Observer from International Association of Consumer Food Organizations expressed its support for the involvement of consumers in Codex work and for the initiatives and activities of CI.

### **REPORTS BY COUNTRIES**

#### **Bhutan**

87. The role of consumer organizations is low profile in Bhutan. However, the Delegation felt that they could play a very important role, particularly in areas of creating awareness of food safety to protect consumer at the grassroots level. Creating awareness and thus information sharing could be a vital play by CI.

<sup>29</sup> ALINORM 99/30A, Appendix II.

<sup>30</sup> CX/ASIA 99/11, CX/ASIA 99/11-Add.1 (CRD 3; comments Consumers International) and 99/11-Add.2 (CRD 8; information from Thailand).

<sup>31</sup> CX/ASIA 99/11, para. 4.

<sup>32</sup> CX/ASIA 99/11-Add.1 (CRD 3).

**India**

88. India has a National Codex Committee in which recognized consumer organizations are represented. Its several Committees also include consumer representatives. They receive all agenda papers, attend committee meetings, and actively participate in them. Consumer representatives have also been included in national delegations to Codex meetings. Consumer representatives are also included in the Central Committee for Food Standards (CCFS), the expert body that recommends mandatory national food standards under PFA Act.

89. Recognized consumer associations are empowered u/s 12 of PFA Act to lift food samples and launch prosecution against cases of adulteration.

**Indonesia**

90. An NGO (Jayasan Lomboka Consumer Indonesia) has been actively participating in the activities. It is one of the members of the National Codex Committee which has been restructured recently. Beside that, Indonesia is also a member of the ISO. This year Consumer Protection Law Number 8/1999 has been successfully established. This law went into force in 20 April 1999. Government Regulation on Food Labelling & Advertisement No 69/1999 will be affected for implementation on 21 July 2000.

**Japan**

91. Regarding the participation of consumers in activities relevant to Codex, the Japanese government in general has taken effort to disclose the process of decision-making. For example, the government convenes the concerning Councils with some committee members representing consumer groups. The record of discussion in the Council will be opened to the public through web site of the government and public comment will also be considered in the process of discussion.

**Nepal**

92. Food control activities are geared up to serve the consumers with the supply of safe and wholesome foods with the active participation of multi-sectoral government and non-government agencies. The role of industry, trade and consumer group along with government agency is taken into account for augmenting quality and safety of foods.

**WHO**

93. One of the 10-Point Regional Strategy for Food Safety in the South-East Asia Region<sup>33</sup> is to establishing effective working relationships with consumers.

**DISCUSSION BY THE COMMITTEE**

94. The Delegation of Thailand also informed the Committee of its national activities regarding this area<sup>34</sup>. Recognizing the importance of consumer participation in the work of Codex, the Delegation made several proposals. The Committee generally supported them and **agreed** that:

- The involvement of consumer organization in elaboration of food standard at all levels of deliberation should be considered to assure greater transparency in the process of Codex work;
- Asian countries should cooperate to encourage better participation of consumers in the food safety standard setting and to implement risk communication to consumers by providing knowledge and information through various means.
- Member countries should consider how to get the consumer organization representatives involved in their national activities.

95. The Chairperson thanked Consumers International for its contribution.

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<sup>33</sup> Made available to the participants.

<sup>34</sup> CX/ASIA 99/11-Add.2 (CRD 8).

**NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 11)<sup>35</sup>**

96. The Delegation of Bhutan, seconded by those of Myanmar and the Republic of Korea, nominated Malaysia. The Committee **agreed** to nominate Malaysia for appointment by the 24th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission as the next Codex Coordinator for Asia. The Delegation of Malaysia thanked the Committee for nomination and assure the Committee to work in close collaboration with the Regional Representative of Asia upon the appointment.

**OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 12)****Composition of Executive Committee**

97. The Delegation of China, referring to the comment made by the Delegation of the Republic of Korea at the 23rd Session of the Commission, proposed that the term of Regional Representatives should be shortened to 2 years to make it compatible with that of the Chairperson and Vice-chairpersons of the Commission. He also proposed to increase the number of membership of the Executive Committee or to increase the number of advisors to improve the representation of the Regions<sup>36</sup>.

98. The Delegation of Malaysia, supported by the Delegation of the Republic of Korea, also proposed to increase the number of advisors accompanying a Regional Representative by 2 so as to promote better input from and collaboration among Member countries in the Region. The Delegation also suggested that selection criteria for advisors be elaborated.

99. The Observer from CI referred to the discussion at the 23rd Session of the Commission<sup>37</sup> and stressed the need to allow consumer organizations as observers at the Executive Committee to make its proceeding as transparent as possible. He also referred to the inquiry of the Delegation of Japan at that session as to whether members could be “observers” at the Executive Meetings and stated that the Commission had asked its Secretariat to consult legal counsels and offices of the Directors-General of FAO and WHO on these matters and report to the Codex Committee on General Principles (CCGP).

100. The Delegation of India, however, expressed the view that admitting too many members would hamper the work of the Executive Committee and that if transparency and fair regional representation were ensured, there would be no need for expanding the membership. The Delegation of the Philippines also expressed concerns due to the apparent lack of clear demarcation between the responsibilities of Regional Representatives and those of Coordinators. These views were supported by the Delegation of Nepal.

101. As no consensus was reached and as the Commission requested the CCGP to consider the composition of the Executive Committee<sup>38</sup>, the Committee urged those interested Member countries to raise their concerns and proposals at the next session of the CCGP in April 2000.

**Need for Improved Cooperation and Interaction among Member Countries in Relation to the Work of Codex**

102. The Delegation of Japan presented CRD 12. Referring to the inclusion of “mineral water” in the Proposed Draft Standard for Bottled/Packaged Waters other than Natural Mineral Waters, the Delegation proposed certain measures to improve performances of the Asian Region in the elaboration of Codex standards, including transmitting information, comments and concerns to the Regional Representative for Asia.

103. The Delegation of the Philippines expressed the view that advising the Executive Committee of the views of countries in the Region was rather the responsibility of the Coordinator as stipulated in Rule 4.(c)(ii) and the responsibilities of Representatives should be of more global and general nature. Several delegations agreed that a clear description was necessary on the responsibilities of Regional Representatives.

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<sup>35</sup> CX/ASIA 99/12.

<sup>36</sup> CX/ASIA 99/2-Add.1 (CRD 2)

<sup>37</sup> ALINORM 99/37, paras 44-46.

<sup>38</sup> ALINORM 99/37, para. 66.

104. The Delegation of India requested that work should be initiated within Codex to provide guidelines to establish a data base at national levels on importing countries' legislation to facilitate exports. It was further stated that guidance to develop such a data base did not conflict with the terms of reference of Codex. A periodic interaction between Members of the Region would help in confirming that application of such legislation was uniform and in harmony with Codex standards. The Committee was informed that assistance for the preparation of such a data base would be sought from FAO, WHO and WTO.

105. The Committee **agreed** to the following recommendations based on the proposals of India and Japan:

- The Committee should request the CCGP to specify the responsibilities of Regional Representatives so as to clearly distinguish their duties from those of Coordinators;
- Member countries should help the Regional Representative for Asia and Coordinator for Asia more actively contribute in the Executive Committee by transmitting information, comments and concerns to one of them, as appropriate, to enable him/her to address those problems faced by Member countries;
- Member countries should be encouraged to submit written comments in response to circular letters and working papers so that the Asian conditions and opinions would be known to the Codex committees concerned;
- Member countries should seek opportunities and mechanisms to exchange information, comments, data and concerns and to increase communication between them;
- Member countries should try to develop jointly necessary data for the elaboration of Codex recommendations;
- FAO and WHO should be encouraged to associate with research institutions of developing countries in coordinating studies for generating epidemiological and other related data to be utilized in the elaboration of Codex standards so as to make them truly worldwide standards; and
- FAO and WHO should invite scientists and experts of developing countries to JECFA, JMPR and expert consultations.

### **Need for Consensus in Elaborating International Standards**

106. The Delegation of Malaysia presented Part II of CRD 17 and proposed that: the Codex Rules of Procedure be amended to define consensus in line with the definition of WTO; if voting was necessary, decisions should be taken by a two-thirds majority of the votes cast both at the Commission and Committee levels; and all written comments received before the meeting should be systematically tabled for discussion at Codex meetings and decisions made should take into account these comments made.

107. There seemed to be general support for the use of a two-thirds majority. However, several delegations expressed concerns about voting rights of countries not present at sessions of the Commission or Committees. As the paper became available at the Session and as the issue would be on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the CCGP, the Committee requested Malaysia to express its opinions at that session and encouraged other countries to study the paper before that session.

### **Special and Differential Treatment to Developing Countries**

108. The Delegation of Malaysia presented Part I of CRD 17 and emphasized that special considerations should be given to the needs and conditions of developing countries during the elaboration of Codex standards and other recommendations; and Codex recommendations should not create obstacles to exports of developing countries. The Delegation proposed that Rule X of the Rules of Procedure be amended to reflect these needs.

109. Some delegations expressed their support in principle. However, it was emphasized that the Codex standards should be based on science and this principle should not be abandoned. It was stated that since one of the objectives of Codex standards was to facilitate trade, the second proposal did not seem necessary. The Delegation of Malaysia clarified that the proposal did not compromise the need for food safety.

110. The Committee was informed that a Codex circular letter<sup>39</sup> on the revision of the Code of Ethics for International Trade had been distributed to Member countries for comments, in which the consideration of special and differential treatment of developing countries was mentioned. The Delegation of Malaysia and other delegations were invited to send written comments to the Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission by the middle of December. As the CRD 17 became available at the session, and as the issue would be on the agenda of the forthcoming session of the CCGP, the Committee requested Malaysia to express its opinions at that session and encouraged other countries to study the paper before that session

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

111. The next session of the Committee was tentatively scheduled to be held in Malaysia early in 2002. The exact dates and venue of the session would be determined after the consultation between the Coordinator and the Codex Secretariat.

112. The Committee noted that the next session of the Committee would be convened in English and Chinese and, if Arabic-speaking countries joined as its Members, also in Arabic. All working documents would also be translated into these languages.

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<sup>39</sup> CL 1999/19-GP.

**SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK**

Subject	Step	For Action by	Document Reference (ALINORM 00/15)
Proposed Draft Standard for Aqueous Coconut Products	5	47th Executive Committee 20th CCPFB	Appendix II paras 16-28
Code of Hygienic Practice for Aqueous Coconut Products	1,2	47th Executive Committee	paras 29-30
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**ALINORM 00/15  
APPENDIX II****PROPOSED DRAFT STANDARD FOR AQUEOUS COCONUT PRODUCTS  
(Advanced to Step 5 of the Codex Procedure)**

The annex to this Standard contains provisions which are not intended to be applied within the meaning of the acceptance provisions of Section 4.A(I)(b) of the General Principles of the Codex Alimentarius.

**1. SCOPE**

This Standard applies to packaged aqueous coconut milk and coconut cream products as defined in Section 2 of this Standard. This Standard does not cover sweetened and/or flavoured coconut beverages.

**2. DESCRIPTION****2.1 PRODUCT DEFINITION**

Coconut milks and coconut creams are the products prepared using a significant amount of separated, whole, disintegrated macerated or comminuted fresh endosperm (kernel) of coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera* L.) and expelled, where most filterable fibres and residues are excluded, with or without coconut water, and/or with additional water.

**2.1.1 Coconut Cream**

Coconut cream is the emulsion extracted from matured endosperm (kernel) of the coconut fruit with or without any addition of coconut water/water and complies with the requirements in Section 3 of this Standard.

**2.1.2 Coconut Milk**

Coconut milk is the dilute emulsion of comminuted coconut endosperm (kernel) in water with the soluble and the suspended solids homogeneously distributed and complies with the requirements in Section 3 of this Standard.

**2.1.3 Coconut Cream Concentrate**

Coconut cream concentrate is the product obtained after the removal of water from coconut cream and complies with the requirements in Section 3 of this Standard.

**2.1.4 Concentrated Coconut Cream**

Concentrated coconut cream is the product obtained after further removal of water from coconut cream concentrate and complies with the requirements in Section 3 of this Standard.

**2.1.5 Light Coconut Milk**

Light coconut milk shall be the product obtained from either the bottom portion of centrifuged coconut milk or by further dilution of coconut milk and complies with the requirements in Section 3 of this Standard.

**2.1.6 Skim Coconut Milk**

Skim coconut milk is the product obtained from either the bottom portion of centrifuged light coconut milk or by further dilution of light coconut milk and complies with the requirements in Section 3 of this Standard.

## 2.2 PROCESS DEFINITION

Coconut milks and coconut creams shall be treated with heat pasteurization, sterilization or ultrahigh temperature (UHT) process.

## 3. ESSENTIAL COMPOSITION AND QUALITY FACTOR

### 3.1 BASIC INGREDIENTS

- Endosperm (kernel) of coconut palm (*Cocos nucifera* L.)
- Coconut water
- Water

### 3.2 PERMITTED INGREDIENTS

- Sodium caseinate

### 3.3 COMPOSITION

Product	Total Solids (% m/m)	Non-fat Solids (% m/m)	Fat (% m/m)	Moisture (% m/m)	pH
	min. – max.	min.		max.	min.
Skim Coconut Milk	5 max.	-	3.75 max.	95.0	5.9
Light Coconut Milk	6.6 - 12.6	1.6	5.0 min.	93.4	5.9
Coconut Milk	12.7 - 25.3	2.7	10.0 min.	87.3	5.9
Coconut Cream	25.4 - 37.3	5.4	20.0 min.	74.6	5.9
Coconut Cream Concentrate	37.4 - 46.1	8.4	29.0 min.	62.6	5.9
Concentrated Coconut Cream	46.2 min.	11.2	35.0 min.	53.8	5.9

### 3.4 QUALITY CRITERIA

Coconut milks and coconut creams shall have normal flavour, odour and colour, characteristic of the products.

## 4. FOOD ADDITIVES

[INS	Food Additives	Maximum Level	Note
<b>Emulsifiers</b>			
432	polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monolaurate	1000 mg/kg	
433	polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monooleate		
434	polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monopalmitate		
435	polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan monostearate		
436	polyoxyethylene (20) sorbitan tristearate		
473	sucrose esters of fatty acid	1500 mg/kg	
<b>Thickeners/Stabilizers</b>			
412	guar gum	Limited by GMP	
415	xanthan gum	Limited by GMP	
466	sodium carboxymethyl cellulose	Limited by GMP	
<b>Preservative</b>			
211	sodium benzoate	1000 mg/kg	only for pasteurized coconut milk
<b>Bleaching agents</b>			
223	sodium metabisulphite	30 mg/kg	
224	potassium metabisulphite	30 mg/kg	]

## 5 CONTAMINANTS

The products covered by the provision of this Standard shall comply with those maximum residue limits established by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for these products.

## 6. HYGIENE

6.1 It is recommended that the products covered by the provisions of this standard be prepared and handled in accordance with the appropriate sections of the Recommended International Code of Practice - General Principles of Food Hygiene (CAC/RCP 1-1969, Rev. 3-1997), Recommended International code of Hygienic Practice for Aseptically Processed and Packaged Low-Acid Foods (CAC/RCP 40-1993), Recommended International Code of Hygienic Practice for Low-Acid and Acidified Low-Acid Canned Foods (CAC/RCP 23-1979, Rev.2-1993).

6.2 The products should comply with any microbiological criteria established in accordance with the Principles for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria for Foods (CAC/GL 21-1997).

## 7. WEIGHTS AND MEASURES

### 7.1 MINIMUM FILL

The hermetically sealed container shall be well filled with the products, and it shall occupy not less than ninety percent (90% v/v) of the water capacity of the container. The water capacity of the container is the volume of distilled water at 20°C which the sealed container will hold when completely filled.

### 7.2 CLASSIFICATION OF DEFECTIVE

A container that fails to meet the required minimum fill of 90% (v/v) of capacity of section 7.1.

## 8. LABELLING

In addition to the provisions of the Codex General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods (CODEX STAN 1-1985, Rev. 3 1999), the following specific provisions apply:

### 8.1 THE NAME OF THE FOOD

The name of the product shall be:

Skim coconut milk  
Light coconut milk  
Coconut milk  
Coconut cream  
Coconut cream concentrate  
Concentrated coconut cream

according to the product definitions and composition in Sections 2 and 3

### 8.2 DECLARATION OF PROCESSES

8.2.1. The process or processes used in preparing the product may be declared where these affect the properties, quality or shelf life of the products, e.g. disintegrated, macerated comminuted, ground, etc.

8.2.2 All coconut milk and coconut cream which undergo thermal process shall, have a declaration of the preservation or sterilizing treatment, (heat treatment or other sterilizing process) e.g. pasteurized, sterilized, High Temperature Short Time (HTST) process or Ultra High Temperature (UHT) process.

## 9. METHODS OF SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

### 9.1 SAMPLING

According to Codex General Guidelines on Sampling<sup>1</sup>.

### 9.2 DETERMINATION OF TOTAL SOLIDS

According to AOAC 925.23A (IDF-ISO-AOAC Method).

### 9.3 DETERMINATION OF TOTAL FAT

According to AOAC 945.48G (Röse-Gottlieb Method)

### 9.4 DETERMINATION OF NON-FAT SOLIDS

Determine by difference of total fat from total solids

### 9.5 DETERMINATION OF MOISTURE

Determine by difference of total solids from a numerical value of 100.

## Annex

This text is intended for voluntary application by commercial partners and not for application by governments

## 1. ADDITIONAL COMPOSITION

Product	Total Solids (% m/m)	Non-fat Solids (% m/m)	Fat (%m/m)
	min-max	min	
Coconut milk			
- coconut milk grade C	12.7 - 15.9	2.7	10 min
- coconut milk grade B	16.0 - 21.7	3.0	13 min
- coconut milk grade A	21.8 - 25.3	4.8	17 min

## 2. ADDITIONAL LABELLING

Coconut milk may be labelled as “coconut milk grade A”, “coconut milk grade B” or “coconut milk grade C” according to the composition specified in Section 1 of this annex.

<sup>1</sup> Currently being elaborated by the Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling.