

codex alimentarius commission

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
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OF THE UNITED NATIONS

WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION

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ALINORM 85/36A

JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Sixteenth Session

Geneva, 1-12 July 1985

REPORT OF THE FOURTH SESSION OF

THE CODEX COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR

LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Havana, Cuba, 17-22 April 1985

Introduction

1. The Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC) was held in Havana, Cuba, from 17-22 April 1985 at the kind invitation of the Government of Cuba.
2. The Session was attended by participants from the following 13 countries: Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela. Observers were present from Canada and Spain and the following international organizations: Group of Latin American and Caribbean Sugar Exporting Countries (GLACSEC), International Standards Organization (ISO), International Organization of Consumers Union (IOCU), International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), Pan-American Standards Commission (COPANT), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Food Programme (WFP). A complete list of participants, including officers from FAO and WHO is contained in Appendix I.
3. The Minister/President of the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Cuba and Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean, Ing. Ramón Darías Rodés, opened the meeting and welcomed the delegates on behalf of the Government of Cuba.
4. The Coordinator referred to the activities of the Cuban Secretariat in carrying out the decisions and recommendations of the Third Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean and the First Workshop. Within the period of the Coordinator's first term of office, 15 countries of the Region and several international organizations had been visited in order to further the aims of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and to harmonize food standardization work in the Region.

The Coordinator expressed his appreciation to the contribution made by PAHO which had sponsored both the First and Second Workshops held in conjunction with the Committee's Third and Fourth Sessions.

The work of the Regional Coordinating Committee would encourage economic integration and unity of the Region which was now facing the common problems imposed by a serious economic crisis. The full text of the Coordinator's speech is attached as Appendix II.

The Committee observed a minute's silence in memory of the late Professor A. Bhumiratana who had been Codex Coordinator for the Asian Region until his death in December 1984.

5. Mr. J.R. Yarza, FAO Representative for Cuba, speaking on behalf of the Director-General of FAO thanked the Government of Cuba for hosting the Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean in Havana in the same generous manner as the Third Session of that Committee in 1984. Recalling that 1985 was the year of the 40th Anniversary of the founding of FAO, Mr. Yarza gave a brief resumé of its activities, one of which was the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme and the Codex Alimentarius Commission. While the major efforts of FAO were directed to providing sufficient food for the world population, it was also concerned with the quality of such food. The Codex Alimentarius Commission was working towards this aim by developing international standards for the major food commodities which benefitted all consumers.

6. Dr. Mario Fernandes of PAHO, speaking on behalf of PAHO's Director, Dr. C. Guerra de Macedo stressed the importance which the Panamerican Health Office attached to the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies. This importance was underlined by the fact that PAHO had again provided for a Workshop on Food Standardization and Health preceding the present session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. Special emphasis had been placed on matters related to food control and food safety and, in particular, administrative problems, difficulties arising from the urbanization process and marginal populations. The Workshop had been successful in outlining the advantages of efficient food protection programmes. Dr. Fernandes expressed the hope that the deliberations of the Workshop would facilitate the discussions in the Committee and stated PAHO's continuing support of its work.

Adoption of the Agenda

7. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/1 - The Provisional Agenda for the Session which in the view of the Committee reflected very well the work of this Committee. The Committee noted that no working document had been prepared for Item 9 (ii) - Pesticide residues in alcoholic beverages other than wine and beer - and agreed to delete this item. It was also noted that under Item 9 (iv) an additional paper would be presented by Cuba on a Code of Practice for Aquaculture. The Committee was also informed that a number of addenda had been prepared to several working papers dealing with such matters as e.g. proposals for activities to increase participation in the work of the Commission (CX/LA 85/4 Add. 1) and a national monitoring programme of contaminants in Argentina (CX/LA 85/5 Add. 1).

The Committee agreed to discuss under item 16 - Other Business - a paper on food protection (Argentina) and another one on the use of the Spanish language in sessions of Codex Committees.

The Delegation of Mexico stated that it attached great importance to the views of this Committee on the need for standards for tropical fruits and vegetables under Item 9 (i).

The Provisional Agenda was adopted as amended, with some rearrangements in the order of the Items.

Election of Vice-Chairman

8. The Committee unanimously elected Dr. Norah M. de Carranza of Argentina to serve as Vice-Chairman during the Session.

Agenda Item 4

MATTERS OF INTEREST ARISING FROM REPORTS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND OF OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES

9. The Committee had before it CX/LA 85/2, Part A, which referred to the above matters.

Executive Committee, 31st Session (ALINORM 85/3) - Report on the Possible Use of a Codex Logo or Statements on Labels indicating conformity with Codex Standards

10. The Committee noted that the Executive Committee at its 31st Session had given consideration to a consultant paper on the use of a Codex logo or a certification system which had also been discussed at previous sessions of this Committee. The Committee was informed that the Executive Committee had basically confirmed the views of the Commission, expressed in earlier sessions, that it was not in favour of introducing such a measure.

11. Concerning the question of certification as such, it had been noted that the Codex Code of Ethics recommended in several places that governments of all countries should provide certification and inspection systems. It had also been noted that several other international organizations and agencies, including GATT, UNECE and ISO had expressed interest in this matter. The paper had suggested that Codex itself should consider taking some initiatives concerning certification, which would not necessarily include the creation of logos or marks of conformity. The Executive Committee requested the Codex Secretariat to issue a circular letter to governments on (a) whether there was a need for a certification system, (b) whether it should be an international one or a national one and (c) what matters should be covered in the certificates to be issued.

12. The Committee noted that the above CL had been issued and that the matter would be further considered by the Executive Committee and the Commission. The Committee decided to allow for further discussion under Item 7 (iii).

Report on the Financial Situation of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme 1982/83 and 1983/84

13. The Committee was informed that the Vice-Chairman of the Commission, Dr. E.R. Méndez, of Mexico had emphasized the need to find funds to help increase the attendance of representatives of developing countries in Codex sessions. He had pointed out that the workshops which PAHO had been able to organize in connection with the two sessions of this Committee had been extremely useful in providing appropriate background information and increased attendance. Dr. Méndez had urged that similar possibilities should be explored for other Committees. This had been strongly supported by the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean and other members of the Executive Committee.

14. The Executive Committee had noted that by virtue of Rule X.4 the cost of attendance had to be borne by member countries. However, the Budget Officer of WHO had indicated that in exceptional circumstances some limited support be given on an ad hoc basis. The Secretariat had been requested to look into alternative ways of funding.

15. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat that a request was being elaborated for a TCDC project involving bilateral donors. The Committee expressed its wish to be kept informed of further developments.

16. The Committee was also informed that the Representative of the Region of Latin America and the Caribbean had expressed concern about the lack of Spanish language facilities in important Committees, such as CCFA. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the host countries of Codex Committees had been contacted and that the authorities of the Netherlands, the host of CCFA, had been favourable to providing interpretation facilities into Spanish. The Committee noted that this matter should be further discussed under Item 16.

Proposed Amendment of Code of Ethics for International Trade in Food vis-à-vis the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes

17. The Committee noted that the Executive Committee had been informed of the view of the Coordinating Committees on this matter (see Para.181 of ALINORM 85/36) and agreed that there was no need for further discussion at this time. It further noted that the 16th Session of the Commission and the preceding Executive Committee would discuss the matter in the light of a circular letter which had been sent to all member countries of the Codex.

Reports of 1983/84 Sessions of Coordinating Committees

18. The Executive Committee had noted with satisfaction the reports of the Regional Coordinating Committee which had met until July 1984 and had expressed its appreciation of the efforts made by these Committees in carrying out the work of the Commission.

Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables

19. The Executive Committee had been informed that the Coordinating Committees had given full consideration to the question of whether there was a need to develop Codex Standards for the above products. The Committee had noted that two Committees had been in favour of such standards (Africa and Latin America and the Caribbean) and two Committees had felt that there was no need for such standards (Asia and Europe). The Committee recalled the comments made by Mexico (see Para. 7) and noted that the Executive Committee had agreed to review the matter at its next Session.

Consideration of whether there is too much detail in certain Codex Standards and whether some parts of these could be made optional

20. The Committee agreed to defer discussion of this matter to Item 12 (See Paras. 199&205)

Future Direction of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme

21. The Committee was informed that the Chairman of the Executive Committee had pointed out that the future direction of the Codex Alimentarius Commission should take account of the following:

- (i) The ongoing publication of the Codex Alimentarius required intensified efforts toward the acceptance, implementation or utilization of Codex Standards and other Codex recommendations by governments and the food industry.
- (ii) The programme of action on a short, medium and longer term basis proposed by the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean in a background paper presented to the Executive Committee.
- (iii) A number of Codex Commodity Committees had adjourned sine die and a number of other Commodity Committees were approaching completion of their programme of work. The Regional Coordinating Committees were gradually changing the direction of their programmes to ensure greater service to developing countries in food safety, including food legislation and food control.
- (iv) Proposals for new or additional Codex work had to take account of the fact of serious budgetary constraints facing the parent bodies.

The Executive Committee had also noted that the Secretariat would prepare a paper assessing the current and likely future workloads of all Codex Committees.

The Executive Committee had agreed that these points should be brought to the notice of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and that provision should be made in the agenda of the 16th Session for discussion of the future direction of the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme. It had also been agreed that a circular letter should be issued asking governments for their views on this subject in order to provide a broader basis for discussion at the Commission's Session.

22. The Committee noted that any new proposals or suggestions for change would have to be carefully considered in the light of existing budgetary constraints, since the Codex Programme was operating under conditions of zero budget growth. However, the countries of the Region were requested to express their views either in writing or verbally for consideration at the 16th Session of the Commission. The Committee noted that some aspects of this matter would also be discussed under Items 7 and 11.

Amendment of Name of Coordinating Committee for Latin America

23. The Committee noted that the Executive Committee acting on behalf of the Commission had agreed to amend the name of the Committee to read as follows: "Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean" and consequently so amend the title of the Coordinator of the Region.

Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP) (16th Session, ALINORM 85/8)

24. The Committee noted that the Delegation of Cuba had proposed to CCFFP that a Code of Practice for Aquaculture and a Standard for Molluscan shellfish should be considered. CCFFP had agreed in principle with the proposal and had suggested that the necessary background papers be sent to the Commission.

25. The Committee noted that a document on aquaculture had been prepared by the Delegation of Cuba for consideration under Item 9 and agreed to discuss the matter further at such point. (See Paras. 167-172)

Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (16th Session, ALINORM 85/24A)

26. The Committee noted that activities related to pesticides and their residues in foods would be discussed under Item 10 and agreed to defer consideration to that time. (See Paras. 173-189).

Codex Committee on Cereals, Pulses and Legumes (CCCPL) (4th Session, ALINORM 85/29)

27. The Committee noted that CCCPL had noted the views of this Committee on the need for a standard for milled rice. It also noted that CCCPL had proposed to the Commission that in order to avoid duplication of work, the Commission should await finalization of the ISO specifications for rice which also covered milled rice. The finalized ISO text should then be sent to governments and Coordinating Committees for comments in order to enable CCCPL to determine whether there was a need for a Codex Standard for milled rice. The Committee noted that this had been agreed by the 15th Session of the Commission.

28. Concerning sorghum and sorghum flour, the Committee was informed that CCCPL had noted the comments made by Mexico and Argentina at the Third Session of this Committee that such standards should be of a world-wide nature. The Delegation of Brazil had supported the above view. The Committee was also informed that the Coordinating Committee for Africa had agreed to refer the question whether such standards should be world-wide to the 16th Session of the Commission and was prepared to discontinue work on its Regional Standards for the present.

29. The Delegates of Mexico and Argentina reiterated their views as expressed at the Third Session of this Committee. The Delegation of Argentina was of the opinion that the necessary studies should be made to determine the need for a standard and should a standard be necessary, it should be world-wide.

Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (CCFH) (20th Session, ALINORM 85/13A)

30. The Committee was informed that CCFH was embarking on the preparation of a Code of Hygiene Practice for Spices. A detailed background paper and the outline of a first draft of the Code was being prepared by a consultant for consideration by the 21st Session of CCFH. The Code would cover the producing, processing and microbiological criteria for spices and herbs and would include guidelines for specific treatments.

Codex Committee on Processed Meat and Poultry Products (CCPMPP)(13th Session, ALINORM 85/16)

Proposed Draft Guidelines for the Use of Vegetable Protein Products in Processed Meat and Poultry Products

31. The elaboration of the above guidelines was in progress in parallel with the preparation of general guidelines on the use of VPP in Foods by the Codex Committee on Vegetable Proteins (CCVP). The Committee noted both in CCVP and CCPMPP difficulties had arisen regarding the use of vegetable protein products in food covered by Codex Standards and, in particular, the labelling of such foods in the case of partial substitution of protein sources.

32. The Executive Committee had been requested to advise on the principle of whether a name that had been established for a food in a Codex Standard could be used as part of the name of a food where some of the protein content had been replaced by vegetable protein. The Executive Committee had confirmed the view expressed by the 6th Session of the Committee on General Principles as reflected in Para. 63 of ALINORM 79/33 which under regulated conditions did permit such use.

33. The matter had been further discussed by the 18th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (CCFL) when the labelling provisions of the Code were considered for endorsement at Step 5. The views of the Committee had been divided and CCFL had recommended that the matter be referred to the Commission.

34. CCPMPP had also been of the opinion that further elucidation of the problem should be obtained by seeking the opinion of countries and Coordinating Committees. The members of the Region were urged to express their views when the matter was being discussed at the 16th Session of the Commission.

Codex Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (CCMAS) (14th Session, ALINORM 85/23)

Mandatory or Advisory Status of Codex Methods of Analysis

35. The Committee noted that only defining methods (Type I) and reference methods (Type II) were subject to acceptance.

Status of Sampling

36. The Committee was informed that the status of sampling in Codex Standards needed further classification and that in view of the complexity of the matter, CCMAS had not been in a position to advise the Commission on the status of sampling procedures in Codex Standards. The Commission wished to be kept informed of further developments.

Codex Committee on Foods for Special Dietary Uses (CCFSDU) (14th Session, ALINORM 85/26)

Guidelines on Supplementary Foods for Older Infants and Young Children

37. The Committee had recognized that the key to elaborating meaningful guidelines for supplementary foods lay in their precise definition so that they were clearly separated from the products covered by the Codex Standards for Foods for Infants and Children.

38. The Committee recalled that it had been the intention to provide guidance to countries on food mainly prepared from local raw materials which could provide during the weaning period those nutrients which were lacking in the local staple foods.

39. The Secretariat conveyed the request from CCFSDU that Coordinating Committees should express their views on such products and submit specific comments on raw materials as well as on the two alternative proposed definitions as contained in CX/LA 85/2.

40. The Committee recognized the importance of such a request and suggested that individual countries of the Region should apply the requested information to CCFSDU.

Agenda Item 5

REVIEW OF ACCEPTANCES OF CODEX STANDARDS AND CODEX MAXIMUM PESTICIDE RESIDUE LIMITS

41. The Committee had before it Working Paper CX/LA 85/2 Part B - Review of Acceptances of the Codex Standards by countries in the Region of Latin America. The Committee recalled that the Commission and the Executive Committee had emphasized the need for more acceptances of Codex Standards, especially by those countries which had been actively involved in the elaboration of those Standards. The Commission had recommended that acceptances should be regularly reviewed at meetings of the Regional Coordinating Committee.

42. The Secretariat informed the Committee that, as instructed by the Commission, the adopted Codex Standards were now published as the Codex Alimentarius, in different volumes according to commodity groups. Volumes II to XVI had already been issued and sent to governments, Volume I, which was the introductory volume containing general matters and Volume XVII were in the course of preparation.

43. The Committee also noted that the publications on acceptances had been updated: The 3rd Revision of Part I of the Summary Acceptances (World-wide and Regional Standards) covered notifications from governments up to December 1984, Revision 2 of Part II on Maximum Residue Limits of Pesticide Residues contained notifications up to September 1983.

44. The Committee was also informed that Codes of Practices were also published as Volumes of the Codex Alimentarius, however, these Codes were not subject to official notification of acceptance by governments.

45. The Secretariat provided an overview on notifications of acceptances by countries of the Region of Latin America and the Caribbean. It also reported on the encouraging action taken by economic groups such as EEC and CMEA concerning the harmonization of food standards of those groups with the relevant Codex Standards. The Secretariat also stated that there was an increasing number of "hidden" acceptances, i.e. trading arrangements were increasingly made in accordance with the provision of Codex Standards.

46. The Delegation of Argentina stated that at the present time more than 100 Standards had been given acceptance. There had been deviations notified mostly with regard to the use of food additives. The Delegation stated that it was considered to be difficult to allow free circulation of products complying with Codex Standards which were essentially different from the relevant national standards.

47. The Delegation of Cuba informed the Committee that the Codex Standards were widely used in Cuba and that several Standards had been officially adopted with specified deviations. Cuba was of the opinion that a wider acceptance by other countries of those Standards which covered important trade items would have a beneficial effect on products exported by other countries of the Region. The Delegation of Cuba expressed its acceptance with specified deviations of the Codex Standard for Quick Frozen Lobsters. It also informed the Committee that it was considering other standards and hoped to report at the 16th Session of the Commission on decisions taken on fruit juices, processed meat and poultry products and on fish and fishery products. With regard to Maximum Residue Limits, Cuba had also indicated target acceptance on the first six Series of Codex Limits for Pesticide Residues.

48. Ten Codes of Practice of particular importance to the Cuban economy had been nationally approved and were considered to be extremely useful.

49. The Delegation of Mexico informed the Committee that the National Codex Committee was carrying out a survey of the Standards, but because of limited resources and late arrival of documents, it had been difficult to react on the question of acceptances. The Delegation of Mexico also stated that MRLs for certain pesticides and commodities of importance to Mexico had not yet been considered by CCPR and suggested therefore that they should be included in the work programme. The Mexican data would be copied to countries of the Region.

50. The Delegation of Brazil informed the Committee that its government was closely following the work of the Commission and intended to report to the 16th Session its position on MRLs.

51. The Delegation of Venezuela informed the Committee that Codex Standards in general were used to formulate national standards. In some cases the Codex Standards had been adopted entirely. A National Committee had been formed to make a survey on pesticide residues.

52. The Coordinator urged countries of the Region to intensify their efforts to accept Codex Standards and MRLs and to make fuller use of the documents provided by the Commission. He also stressed that the Secretariat had a role to play in the efficient distribution of these documents.

53. The Observer of IOCU referred to the International Code for the Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes which was intended to remedy inappropriate marketing practices in these products and stressed that all countries should use the provisions of the Code to ensure that health of infants was properly protected. He was of the opinion that the supplementary foods for which guidelines were being elaborated by CCFSDU should be carefully considered vis-à-vis the scope of the International Code.

Agenda Item 6

REPORT ON FAO AND WHO/PAHO ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

54. The Committee had before it working documents CX/LA 85/3 and CX/LA 85/3 Add. 1 providing information on those activities related to the work of the Commission. The Secretariat presented the list of activities of these Organizations.

Joint FAO/WHO Activities

Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA)

55. The Committee was informed that both these expert bodies had met annually for more than 20 years and that they provided the expert advice for the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) and the Codex Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) respectively.

56. It was pointed out that to a large degree the achievement of the work of these two Committees has led to the fact that all Codex Standards and MRLs may be considered to be safe.

57. The most recent sessions of the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues were held in December 1983 and in September/October 1984. The 1984 meeting evaluated or re-evaluated 53 pesticides and again established ADIs and MRLs for several of them. Planned meetings of the JMPR have been scheduled for 1985 and 1986.

58. The 28th Session of the FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Additives (JECFA) was held in April 1984 and the Report has been issued in the WHO Technical Reports Series (TRS No. 710). The specifications for identity and purity of the food additives evaluated by JECFA have been published by FAO in the Food and Nutrition Paper Series No. 31 (Part 1 - Food Colours, Part 2 - Other Food Additives). The next session of the JECFA will be held in Geneva in April 1985.

Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme

59. The Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme was started in 1976 to implement a recommendation of the UN Conference on the Human Environment held in 1972. When the programme was set up, national laboratories carrying out monitoring activities were identified and designated as FAO/WHO Collaborating Centres. Data on the levels of selected contaminants (organochlorine and organophosphorous pesticides, PCBs lead, cadmium and aflatoxins) in various foods and in total diet have been collected from the 22 FAO/WHO Collaborating Centres participating in the Programme. Summary reports of the data and evaluations have been published; inter-laboratory analytical quality assurance studies have been conducted; a basic guideline on food contamination monitoring has been published and a provisional edition of a publication entitled "Guidelines for the Study of Dietary Intakes of Chemical Contaminants" has been published. A publication on Analytical Quality Assurance was published in 1981 as part of project activities with a second report "Analytical Quality Assurance" published in 1983.

60. The Committee was informed that one of the important aspects of the Joint Programme was that dealing with the analytical quality assurance of the sample results being produced by the collaborating centres. A programme has been designed to evaluate the quality of the information being provided under the Joint Programme.

61. The Secretariat informed the Committee that a review mission had been undertaken by an FAO staff member in late 1984 to review the food control laboratory capabilities of certain countries of Latin America (Costa Rica, Peru, Uruguay) so as to determine if these facilities may be invited to participate in the Joint Programme. The results of these visits are under review and a determination will be made shortly. Currently in Latin America and the Caribbean Region, Brazil, Guatemala and Mexico have participating centres under this Programme.

Food Irradiation

62. The Committee was informed that an International Consultative Group on Food Irradiation had been created which had held its first meeting in Vienna, in December, 1984. During this meeting, approximately U.S.\$ 80,000 were pledged to carry out - during 1985 - activities which promoted international trade in irradiated food and its public acceptance.

63. A brief report was also given on the Joint FAO/IAEA International Seminar on Food Irradiation Processing which had been held in Washington, D.C. in March 1985. The report on this meeting would be available from IAEA, Vienna, Austria.

64. The Committee was also informed that the Codex Committee on Food Labelling had finalized at its 15th Session the revision of the General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods. That Standard contained specific labelling provisions for irradiated foods (first generation) and for irradiated ingredients and single ingredient foods made from irradiated foods (second generation). CCFL had not been in a position to agree on a concrete form of wording by which the fact of irradiation should appear on the label. The Committee noted that, if adopted by the 16th Session of the Commission, those labelling provisions would also be included, by reference, in the General Standard for Irradiated Foods which had already been adopted and sent to the governments for acceptance.

Veterinary Drug Residues in Food

65. The Secretariat informed the Committee that a Joint FAO/WHO Expert Consultation on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food, to which reference had been made during the last session of the Committee, had in the meantime met at FAO Headquarters, Rome, from 29 October to 5 November 1984. This consultation, the report of which will soon be available, as No. 32 in the FAO Food and Nutrition Paper Series, had recommended the establishment of a Codex Committee on Residues of Veterinary Drugs in Food in order that Codex could determine priorities in this area, recommend maximum residue levels and develop Codes of Practice. During its forthcoming 16th Session, (July 1985, Geneva) the Commission was expected to make a decision regarding the establishment of a new Codex Committee dealing exclusively with veterinary drug residues.

Guiding Principles on Food Safety Evaluation

66. The Joint FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Safety, Geneva, 1983 (for report see WHC-TRS No. 705, 1984) had not only pointed to the appalling health and economic consequences caused by contaminated food, but had also stressed the urgent need for Member States to strengthen their national programme to respond to this challenge. Programme development, however, required continuous evaluation as an integral part of programme management to ensure that all activities bring substantial improvement. For this reason, FAO and WHO were developing a document on food safety evaluation which would contain, *inter alia*, a list of indicators to be used for monitoring. The document was expected to be available, as a provisional edition, in late 1985 and that a final edition will be published in about two years' time, allowing the incorporation of experiences made during the early time of its use.

67. The Delegation of Brazil complimented the Secretariat on the quality of the reports and called upon all countries to make more use of activities, information and assistance which is available from FAO, WHO, PAHO and other international bodies.

68. The Delegations of Argentina and Cuba fully supported the view expressed by the Delegation of Brazil and recognized the contributions made available to all countries of the Region.

69. The Delegation of Mexico informed the Committee of the value of their participation in the Joint FAO/WHO Food Contamination Monitoring Programme, including the activity involving laboratory quality control. The programme was being expanded into a national food contamination programme.

70. The Observer from Canada expressed the view that the volume and complexity of Codex documentation created certain problems with respect to utilization of this material. As part of an action plan to improve this situation, he suggested that more explicit guidelines be established for Codex Contact Points with respect to distribution of documents; including, in particular, a distribution system to colleges and universities offering food science studies.

71. The Delegation of Peru informed the Committee of the great value of the information provided by JECFA; however, it was pointed out that there was a problem with late arrival of the reports and that every effort should be made to accelerate the publication of the reports.

FAO Activities

Report on FAO Activities Related to the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

72. The Representative of FAO informed the Committee that FAO continued to place strong emphasis on its work at country and regional levels in strengthening food control systems to ensure a safe and wholesome food supply and on the protection of the consumer against health hazards and commercial fraud. The technical cooperation with developing countries in this area had consisted of advice on drafting or updating of comprehensive food law and regulating assistance on improvement of food inspection and analysis programmes and facilities, training of personnel engaged in food control activities, and the promotion of improved food quality control in the food production and distribution chain. Training was a high priority activity.

73. Food control projects were considered as development activities and one of FAO's main efforts was to bring about closer cooperation with all sectors involved so as to have maximum use of resources and reduce unnecessary duplication of efforts.

74. The Committee was informed of several examples of several FAO assisted projects in food control, food contamination monitoring, etc., carried out both on a global basis and a regional basis. These included assistance provided to Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Dominica, Paraguay and Uruguay.

75. The Committee was informed about a new training programme called the "FAO/UNEP/USSR Training Activities on Food Contamination with Special Reference to Mycotoxins" initiated with UNEP support. Activities included two training courses with the first training programme held in 1984 in the Soviet Union with participants from 16 developing countries. The second programme is scheduled to begin in April 1985, again in the Soviet Union, with participants from another 16 countries, including those of the Latin American and Caribbean countries.

76. The Committee was informed of an FAO training course for the countries of Latin America in Mycotoxin Analysis scheduled to be held in July 1985 in Guatemala.

77. The Committee was informed that because of the increased concern of prevention and control of mycotoxins, aflatoxin was receiving the highest priority and that as a follow-up to the Joint FAO/WHO/UNEP International Conference on Mycotoxins held in Nairobi in 1976, FAO and WHO were tentatively proposing to hold a second International Conference on Mycotoxins in 1987.

78. The Committee was provided with information concerning FAO recently initiated studies to determine the kinds and levels of contaminants found in street foods. These studies also included the obtaining of socio-economic data and as a result should provide a base of information from which further follow-up action might be recommended. Currently such studies were being undertaken in Indonesia, Colombia and Guatemala. As a result of the concern expressed by the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, a Joint FAO/PAHO Regional Workshop on Street Foods in Latin America was planned to be held in Peru in October 1985 at which the problems of street foods will be discussed with an outcome of a plan of action to improve the quality and safety of these foods.

79. The Committee was informed that FAO, with the assistance of UNEP, has revised the Manual of Food Quality Control - "Food Inspection" (Food Nutrition Paper Series No. 14.5 Prov.), which had been prepared in 1981 for use in developing countries. The revised manual was available in English with the Spanish and French version expected in mid-1985.

80. FAO, in cooperation with the Swedish Government, was revising the Manual on Food Quality Control No. 14.2 "Chemical Analysis, Contaminants, Techniques", which should be available for distribution in English, French and Spanish in late 1985.

Standard Reference Materials

81. FAO was maintaining a supply of some standard reference analytical materials for organo-chlorine pesticides, heavy metals and aflatoxins, which were made available to national authorities on request.

82. The Representative of FAO reminded the Committee that in order for FAO to consider providing assistance to national governments, official requests must be received from the concerned national authorities and that one of the most important criteria was the priority plans in the particular area by governments.

Report on WHO Activities (Global and Inter-Regional)

83. The objective of WHO in the field of food safety was to cooperate with member states in an attempt to reduce, inter alia, foodborne mortality and morbidity. Some of the more recent major activities include the following:

- (i) Campylobacter jejuni has only recently been recognized as an important causative agent of foodborne enteric infection in man which is mainly transmitted via raw milk and undercooked or recontaminated poultry. Three programmes of WHO (Diarrhoeal Disease Control, Food Safety, Zoonoses) therefore organized a consultation to review this rather new problem and to identify technologies to prevent the disease in man. The report of the consultation was available from WHO/HQ(VPH/CDD/FOS/84.1).
- (ii) The Committee was informed that WHO had contacted several food industries to discuss possibilities for cooperation, mainly in the field of food safety education of consumers. The representatives of industry, during an informal consultation in Geneva on 1-2 May 1984, had welcomed this initiative of WHO and had indicated that they might be able to assist WHO in its efforts to improve the food safety at consumer level. WHO was now in the process of elaborating a programme and budget for consideration by the industry.
- (iii) The Committee was also informed that WHO/HQ, jointly with PAHO, had undertaken a pilot project, analysing hazards and critical points of domestic food preparation, with particular emphasis on weaning food preparation in Peru. This type of work was seen as the technical basis for the development of appropriate health education programmes, which had to be based on

knowledge of prevailing food handling practices, prevailing beliefs and the cultural values attached to these practices, as well as the social and economic roles they fulfil.

- (iv) Under the aegis of the WHO Regional Office for Europe, a surveillance programme for the control of foodborne infections and intoxications was launched in 1980 with the overall objective of providing support to European countries in the prevention and control of foodborne diseases. Under this programme, a manual on surveillance of foodborne diseases had been prepared. Although this programme was essentially tailored to the needs and conditions of European countries, it could be seen as a model for several other (sub) regions of the world where epidemiological studies, and in particular surveillance of foodborne diseases, was overdue.
- (v) Activities related to food safety/food hygiene had been carried out by WHO since the very early days of the Organization. Many technical papers, reports of meetings, monographs, etc. had been published since. The WHO catalogue of official publications listed several of these food safety publications, but by no means all. Therefore, the Secretariat had prepared a list of selected WHO and Joint FAO/WHO publications on food safety/food hygiene which was distributed to all members of the Committee.
- (vi) The Committee was reminded that several WHO programmes carried out activities which were of immediate interest to national food safety and food control staffs and in this way to the work of the CAC. In this context, reference had also been made to the Environmental Health Criteria Documents, to the International Digest of Health Legislation and to the follow-up work undertaken concerning the International Code of Breast-milk Substitutes and the resolution WHA 34.23 on Nutritional Value and Safety of Products specifically intended for Infants and Children.

Report on PAHO Activities Relating to the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (regional and country level activities)

84. The main activities carried out during this period have been:

- (i) Cooperation with the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC)

There had been cooperation with CCLAC in connection with the Third Session, held in Havana, Cuba, from 27 March to 2 April 1984 and the present (Fourth) Session held in Havana from 17 to 22 April 1985. The purpose was to encourage and facilitate the attendance of delegates from a greater number of countries.

This cooperation consisted of the organization and conducting of the First Workshop on Food Standardization on Food and Health, in cooperation with the State Standardization Committee of Cuba, held in Havana from 24-26 March 1984, immediately before the Third Session of CCLAC. It was attended by representatives from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Peru, Trinidad and Tobago and Venezuela. Canada participated in an observer capacity. Officers from the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme also took part in this meeting and in the organization of the Second Workshop on Food Standardization and Health, to be held on 15-16 April 1985, immediately before the Fourth Session of CCLAC.

- (ii) Cooperation in the establishment of programmes or activities for guarantee and/or quality control of food analysis laboratories

The proposal was to increase the reliability of the reports provided by the analytical services. These cooperation activities had been conducted mainly through the Panamerican Zoonosis Centre (PAZC) of PAHO.

(iii) Cooperation with national programmes

There was collaboration with the authorities in the Argentine Republic in the preparation of a diagnosis of the situation and the document of the National Food Protection Programme (PRONAPAL).

(iv) Cooperation to encourage inter-country coordination

Establishment of the Commission for Veterinary Inspection of Meat in the Plate River Basin (CINVECC). In December 1984, this Commission was established in the presence of the Ministers of Agriculture; PAZC is ex officio in charge of its Secretariat. In June 1985, the Commission's first technical meeting will be held; it is expected that Argentina, Brazil, Paraguay and Uruguay will attend.

(v) Cooperation with applied research

Application of the concept, "Hazard Analysis - Critical Control Points" (HACCP). One of the main recommendations formulated by the FAO/WHO Expert Committee on Food Safety (TRS 705, 1984) was to conduct research, applying the new HACCP approach to infant food prepared in rural areas. WHO started to carry out this recommendation through a meeting with the Foodborne Diseases Centre, Atlanta, United States. With the cooperation of the HPV Programme, PAZC and the PAHO Representative in Lima, a research team was organized (Dr. Frank Bryan, CDC, Dr. Silvia C. Michanie of Argentina, a PAHO consultant and officers from the Centre for Research on Nutrition and Food Control - CINCA - of the Ministry of Health) which studies food in households in three natural regions of Peru (Lima-Costa, Puno-Sierra, Iquitos-Selva).

(vi) Collective and individual training

PAHO cooperated in collective training through a series of events, such as the course in Methodology of Teaching Food Protection for health promoters and health inspectors, which was organized by the National Faculty of Public Health in Medellin, Colombia. Participants from Colombia, Mexico and Uruguay attended.

(vii) Supply of printed reference material and biological products for use in food analysis laboratories

This cooperation activity was carried out in various countries.

Spanish translation continued of the scientific information papers on pesticides published by WHO and the book on the Agromedical Approach to Handling Pesticides - Some Environmental and Health Considerations, edited by John E. Davies of the University of Miami. These publications will shortly be ready for distribution to countries.

(viii) Attendance at specialized technical consultations

During this period many countries in the Region held technical consultations on practical problems that had arisen, especially as regards analytical techniques, interpretation of results, aspects of legislation and research on foodborne diseases.

(ix) Inter-American Conference on Food Protection

This Conference will be held from 5-9 August 1985 at PAHO Headquarters in Washington, D.C. It is being organized by the National Academy of Sciences (NAS) of the United States with the support of the Governments of Canada, USA (FDA, USDA, EPA, etc.) and Mexico, and FAO, PAHO and OAS. PAHO is cooperating in the organization of this Conference.

85. In the evolving discussion, several delegations expressed their appreciation to FAO, WHO and PAHO for the work undertaken, which could be of considerable help to member states. The Chairman in summing up this agenda item, called upon FAO and WHO to continue with their valuable support to member states.

Results of the First and Second Workshops on Food Standardization

86. The Secretariat of the Coordinating Committee, in presenting this item, made reference to the results of the First Workshop on Food Standardization and Health held in Havana in 1984 and to the extent to which the decisions taken on that occasion had been implemented. The Committee was informed that a preliminary edition of the Final Report of the First Workshop had been prepared and would be published by PAHO. Many of the recommendations of this First Workshop have been implemented and others were on the way to being implemented in the course of this Meeting, as they were among the items of the Programme.

87. The list of Codex Alimentarius Contact Points for Latin America and the Caribbean was drawn up and distributed. With regard to the establishment of a Technical Secretariat of the Coordinating Committee, with the aid of PAHO, it was reported that this problem is currently being studied in order to reach a final solution.

88. The recommendations arising from the First Workshop on Food Standardization not only have become a reflection of the problems to be solved in the countries of the Region, but they have also become guides for the work of the Coordinating Committee.

89. The report on the results of the Second Workshop on Food Standardization and Health, held on 15-16 April 1985, preceding the Committee meeting, was presented by the General Rapporteur of the Workshop, Mr. Sergio Sandoval from Mexico.

90. The Committee wished to place on record its appreciation of and gratitude to PAHO for having organized that Workshop immediately before the Fourth Session, and to the State Standardization Committee of Cuba for having hosted it.

91. The Committee considered that the Workshop had been extremely useful, and noted that the items discussed deserved continued attention by the countries.

92. The Committee also took note of the recommendations of the Workshop and pointed out that on this occasion as well a final report of the Workshop would be published.

93. The Committee also wished to place on record its appreciation of the work of the General Moderator, (Dr. Enio A. Márques-Pereira of Brazil), the General Rapporteur (Mr. Sergio Sandoval of Mexico), the rapporteurs of the groups that participated in the Workshop and the experts who presented the various papers.

94. The Regional Coordinator once more acknowledged the efforts and support offered by PAHO and reiterated the praise of those efforts expressed by the Executive Committee of the Commission at its 31st Meeting and by the WHO senior officers.

95. The Committee expressed the wish that a similar workshop be held immediately before the Fifth Session of CCLAC, on some of the topics proposed by the participants in the Second Workshop.

Agenda Item 7

EXAMINATION OF PROGRESS IN THE WORK UNDERTAKEN BY THE COORDINATOR

Activities to Increase Technical Cooperation in Food Standardization

96. In presenting this item, the Secretariat noted that the Committee had before it Documents CX/LA 84/4 Part I and CX/LA 85/4 Part I, Add. 1, as well as a proposed questionnaire with the designation Conference Room Document No. 1.

97. The Secretariat referred to the mandate given by the Coordinator during the Third Session of the Committee, on the need to present some preliminary ideas on activities to increase technical cooperation in food standardization, and considered a proposed Plan of Action which, in the Secretariat's understanding, was one of the ways to increase that cooperation.
98. In brief, Document CX/LA 85/4 Part I presented a Specific Plan of Action for Co-operation which included proposals such as studies for exchange of documentation, technical assistance, training of specialists and the creation or improvement of the basic equipment for activities of interest; all based on the interests expressed during the visits made to 15 countries of the Region at the request of the Coordinator.
99. The WHO Representative made a proposal on the importance of epidemiological studies, and suggested the advisability of having subregional cooperation centres to reinforce the foodborne disease surveillance programmes. He noted that benefits could be reaped from the experiences of Europe in this field, for which PAHO support could also be counted on, once a formal request for cooperation was presented.
100. Several Delegations (Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Costa Rica, Mexico, Peru, Uruguay and Venezuela) congratulated the Secretariat for the document presented and expressed their complete agreement with it. They also pointed out the need for coordinated action in the Region on these matters. For their part, the Delegations of Brazil and Mexico expressed their support for the proposal of the WHO Representative.
101. The Delegation of Mexico stated that steps were being taken in that country to implement the mechanics of the work that were described in the document and that, with regard to cooperation, Mexico was prepared to offer to interested countries of the Region documentation on food inspection and monitoring as well as regulations contained in various legislations on the matter of food. It also referred to laboratory training events being carried out under the auspices of PAHO and the UNDP, in which delegates from Latin America and the Caribbean could participate.
102. The Delegation of Brazil, referring to Document CX/LA 85/4 Part I, Add. 1, reported on the existence in that country of a National Codex Committee comprised of various Ministries, and expressed its confidence that with CCLAC and PAHO support, a dynamic and efficient cooperation programme could be implemented. The Delegation expressed its support for work on the basis of bilateral contacts.
103. The Delegation of Venezuela stated that it was prepared to offer, as cooperation, the technical food standards drawn up by that country.
104. The Delegation of Costa Rica put on record its position in favour of active participation by the Codex Contact Points within the various countries in the work of the Commission and expressed its country's interest in organizing a National Codex Committee in the near future.
105. The Delegation of Colombia reported that there was a multisectorial committee for Codex in that country which had received all the documents of the Commission and its bodies.
106. The Delegation of Peru was in favour of developing cooperation among the countries of the Region as an appropriate way to implement Codex work. It placed at the disposition of the Delegates the regulations developed in Peru on health aspects of food services for human groups in relation to restaurants and related services.
107. The Delegation of Uruguay expressed its willingness to act as liaison between the Uruguay Codex Contact Point and the Regional Coordinating Committee.
108. The Observer of the International Organization of Consumer Unions (IOCU) reported on that Organization's willingness to provide CCLAC with publications aimed at fostering new consumer organizations.

109. The Observer of Canada, for its part, offered the Committee the resources of that country which comprised analytical methods and a manual on inspection procedures.

110. The Observer of Spain thanked the Coordinator, the Secretariat and the Government of Cuba for inviting Spain to participate as Observer in the Fourth Session of CCLAC. It offered its experience in adapting Spanish legislation to Codex Standards and to the legislation of the EEC, of which it would soon become a member.

111. The Regional Coordinator considered that the statements made by the Delegations proved that there are real possibilities for aid in meeting the needs of the Region on the basis of cooperation and thanked the Delegations for their offers.

112. The Secretariat reminded the countries of the importance of keeping in contact with the Office of the Regional Coordinator in order to learn of the activities carried out in the countries.

113. The Representative of WHO, referring to Document CX/LA 84/4 Add. 1, noted that in following the practice of presenting reports in Committee meetings on the activities carried out by FAO, WHO and PAHO related to the Codex Commission, it would be very beneficial for the delegations from the various countries participating in future Committee meetings to provide information on the measures adopted in their countries between one meeting and the next aimed at improving food safety and eliminating foodborne diseases. These reports could be made on the basis of Document CX/LA 85/3 as well as the experiences of the meetings on food surveillance systems convened by WHO.

114. The Delegations of Argentina, Brazil and Cuba supported the proposal and suggested the importance of having a guide for drafting such a report. The Delegation of Cuba likewise considered it important to reflect in those reports not only efforts undertaken but also results obtained.

115. The Delegation of Mexico, supported by the Delegation of Venezuela and referring to the need to organize the infrastructure, noted the difficulty of organizing the information, bearing in mind the difficulties encountered in obtaining official statistics. For this reason, both Delegations requested PAHO support in obtaining the best options for organizing health controls and presenting the reports.

116. The Coordinator agreed that this was a difficult task but that with the cooperation of WHO, PAHO and FAO, work could be done in this direction in order to present the reports in the CCLAC meetings.

117. In concluding the discussion on this item, the Committee agreed that the Regional Coordinator would request PAHO's support on a firm basis to move forward with the recently adopted Programme of Cooperation.

118. Referring to Document CX/LA 85/4 Part I, Add. 1 and in particular to the need for member states to participate actively in sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary Committees, including the Regional Coordinating Committees, the Committee was reminded by the Secretariat that during several sessions of Coordinating Committees of this and other Regions, recommendations had been made and resolutions had been adopted to implement certain food safety and other related activities at the country level. In addition requests had been made to international organizations on the need for increased technical cooperation.

119. During each session of Regional Coordinating Committees, FAO and PAHO/WHO were reporting on their activities related to the work of the Commission, which were frequently a follow-up to those recommendations and requests made to the Organizations during the previous sessions of the Coordinating Committees. As of now, a more formalised reporting system for member states on actions taken at their level had not been introduced. However, Delegations did report on the acceptance of Codex Standards and Codex MRLs by their respective governments. It was therefore now proposed that during further sessions of this Coordinating Committee, Delegations should be requested to submit reports on progress made in their countries in the improvement of food safety and in the prevention

of foodborne diseases. In order to provide guidance on the format of the reports which were intended to monitor such progress, it was suggested that Delegations examine carefully the draft document on Food Safety Evaluation (see Para. 66 of this Report) which would be available by the end of this year and which would contain a list of indicators applicable for monitoring. In this context the Committee was informed that the World Health Assembly had also embarked on monitoring progress in the implementation of the Strategy for Health for All by the Year 2000.

120. The Delegations of Argentina, Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and Venezuela responded to this proposal and supported it. The point was made that it was certainly not an easy task to prepare such country reports but if appropriate guidelines were available (as contained in the above-mentioned Document on Food Safety Evaluation), countries could certainly benefit from this exercise. The Chairman, in summarising the discussions, noted that the Committee agreed with the above proposal and requested that an appropriate item be included in the agenda for the next session of the Committee.

121. The Chairman expressed the hope that all countries of the Region, with the support of PAHO, would find it possible to act upon this proposal.

Surveillance Programmes for the Prevention and Control of Foodborne Diseases in Latin America and the Caribbean

122. Concerning the fundamental problem of foodborne diseases, particularly the diarrhoeal disease malnutrition syndromes, the Expert Committee on Food Safety, Geneva 1983 (for report see WHO/TRS No. 705, 1984) had proposed that serious consideration should be given to incorporating appropriate epidemiological studies into food control activities and that the development of regional (or subregional) facilities to this end was indicated. It was therefore felt important that countries of the region give consideration to the formation of (sub) regional centres in order to cooperate with each other for the establishment or strengthening of national foodborne disease surveillance programmes which should be integrated into already existing national programmes to monitor morbidity and mortality. The surveillance programmes for the control of foodborne infections and intoxications in Europe (see Para. 83 (iv) of this report) could be seen as a model for such an activity. It was proposed that at future sessions of the Regional Coordinating Committee, the exchange of information on the work of such (sub) regional centres should be a standing item.

123. The Committee was informed that WHO/PAHO was ready to cooperate with the member states of the Region, if so required, for the establishment and strengthening of foodborne disease surveillance programmes. Delegates of several countries spoke in support of this proposal.

Agenda Item 7 (ii)

ACTION PROGRAMME FOR THE ELABORATION OF A HARMONIZED SYSTEM OF REGIONAL FOOD STANDARDS

124. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/4 Part II. The Secretariat explained that this Document was prepared in response to a decision of the Third Session of the Committee and a long-standing aspiration of the Region. In order to elaborate this Document, the Secretariat of the Coordinator established contacts between, among others, several regional organizations, such as COPANT, CARICOM and the Hipólito Unanue Agreement, and comparative studies were undertaken that will lead to a harmonized system of regional food standards.

125. The Secretariat requested adoption of the Document in order to organize the above-mentioned work with the Region and sub-regional organizations and to finalize implementation of the activities of the plan of work that appears in the document, so that the results of the study may be presented to the next Committee Session.

126. The Regional Coordinator reported that this matter had been discussed with the Director of the International Trade Centre (ITC/UNCTAD/GATT) to get the support of this organization and its regional systems. The Coordinator likewise reported on the steps taken by the ITC and by Cuba with the Government of Spain to obtain aid in this endeavour. The Committee would be informed later on of the results of these steps.

127. The PAHO Representative noted with regard to the work on harmonization that PAHO had been active and had collected information in this regard, which it would be pleased to present to the Committee.

128. The Delegations of Mexico and Brazil expressed their acknowledgement of the efforts made to implement the Programme for Harmonization of Standards.

129. In addition, the Delegation of Mexico, in its capacity of member agency of the Committee and Representative of the Panamerican Commission on Technical Standards (COPANT), expressed the latter organization's agreement, indicated in the resolutions of the COPANT Council Meeting held in Mexico City from 26-29 March 1985, that is to express its willingness to cooperate broadly in carrying out the comparative study of COPANT standards with the Codex World-wide Standards.

130. The Committee endorsed the plan presented in relation to the Plan of Action to elaborate a harmonized system and took note with appreciation of the COPANT offer to participate in these tasks.

Agenda Item 7 (iii)

POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING A DATA BANK OR REGIONAL INFORMATION CENTRE ON FOOD STANDARDIZATION AND CERTIFICATION PROBLEMS

131. The Panamerican Health Organization was in full accord on the need to organize this information centre and believed it necessary to consider the budgetary constraints that implementation of this idea would entail. If it were created, PAHO considered that it would be best located in Washington, D.C., at the PAHO Central Office; and that the co-operation of all countries would be indispensable for its organization.

132. The breadth of information that would have to be covered should include a series of topics such as: legislation and standardization; incidence and prevalence of infections caused by toxins present in foods, and foodborne diseases; government services responsible for food protection; scientific-technical publications on these subjects; trained technical and professional staff; technical meetings, seminars, etc.

133. The possibility of preparing a comprehensive project on this subject by the end of the year was suggested.

134. The abundant scientific-technical material produced by the countries of the Region was stressed, as were the offers made by all the participants of placing these experiences at the disposal of the Codex Regional Coordinating Committee.

Agenda Item 8

PROBLEMS OF FOOD CONTROL IN RELATION TO URBANIZATION

135. The Secretariat pointed out that the background paper for this item (CX/LA 85/5) was based on an FAO consultancy study mission to large cities in Brazil, Venezuela and Jamaica to learn of current problems related to food supplies in larger cities, and programmes which were established to resolve such problems. The Secretariat paper contained background information on general problems related to urbanization, and sections on specific problems and programmes related to food production, storage, processing, and wholesale and retail marketing. The Secretariat paper also reported on restaurants, snack bars and itinerant sellers of foods, and contained a discussion of different types of food control systems as they relate to urban food problems. Finally, the Secretariat paper contained recommendations for further actions such as surveys to identify clearly and assess urban food control problems, and necessary steps to strengthen information and technical structures to utilize better available food control resources.

136. In introducing the background paper, the Consultant pointed out that the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean was a good forum for discussing problems of urbanization since it gave all countries of the Region the opportunity to share information on current programmes in each country. The Secretariat pointed out that in making its survey of urbanization problems prior to the Codex Coordinating Committee

meeting, it was learned that there was no current system to share information on effective programmes between countries of the Region, and expressed its hope that the Coordinating Committee could be used as one of the means to promote sharing of information.

137. The Consultant discussed positive programmes which had been studied in Brazil, Venezuela and Jamaica. Among these were State of Sao Paulo activities to distribute efficiently basic foods in the State and to promote consumer programmes and home growing of foods; Brazilian national programmes to control meat and meat product contamination; Venezuelan programmes to control itinerant sellers of foods, and to require good quality control of manufactured foods; and Jamaican programmes to control food wastage in school feeding activities. The Secretariat also discussed current food problems related to exports from the region and pointed out that in 1984 more than 1,500 shipments worth U.S.\$ 51,000,000 were rejected by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for reasons of contamination, adulteration or mislabelling, and pointed out that lack of food control systems to prevent losses of this magnitude also were linked to failure to prevent many food related problems of urbanization.

138. In discussing this agenda item, a number of Delegations expressed their concern about the problems of urbanization related to foods, and explained programmes underway in their countries to attack such problems. The Delegation of Venezuela explained the system of standardization and industrial quality control utilized in Venezuela; the administrative system used to assure uniform execution of national policies at the local levels; weekly reporting systems to collect information on foodborne and related illnesses; and programmes to control itinerant vendors of foods. The Delegation of Mexico also expressed its concern with street foods, and mentioned its educational programmes to teach methods of correct food handling practices. Mexico also explained its National Supply System to assure better collection, shipping, storing and marketing of foods, and expressed the need for more regional workshops and seminars to help in sharing of information on urbanization. The Delegation of Mexico also mentioned current actions underway to revise legislation to promote better inter-agency cooperation and better utilization of resources.

139. The Delegation of Brazil stated that increasing emphasis on problems of urbanization by FAO and WHO was welcomed since it helped involved national agencies in planning more cooperation and work in this area. Brazil also reported on current programmes on control of food safety problems in all foods, and meat and meat product contamination from pesticides, heavy metals and other chemicals, including laboratory infrastructure and methods of sampling and analysis. The Delegation of Brazil mentioned that a sub-regional group of Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay would be meeting to discuss biological problems in meat products and called on the Regional Coordinating Committee to assist in giving wider circulation to the technical papers which would be used in this meeting. This would be useful in identifying strategies for controlling contaminants, since without such a strategy, laboratories for identifying contamination problems were not particularly useful.

140. The Observer from IOCU welcomed the emphasis in the Secretariat paper on consumer education, and read from a previously published document of IOCU on food problems related to marketing techniques which could lead consumers to buy nutritionally unsound foods.

141. The Delegation of Argentina pointed out that control of food problems related to urbanization required a multi-sectoral approach and that Argentina was giving attention to controlling contamination problems in exported foods. Programmes in Argentina were currently underway to improve local control of contamination problems, including a nationwide FAO-supported food contamination monitoring programme. The Delegation of Argentina introduced a paper (CX/LA 85/5 Add. 1) which summarized the progress and plans for the national food contamination monitoring programme for the information of other Delegations. Argentina also pointed out that it had created a central market on the periphery of Buenos Aires to enable efficient marketing of fruits and vegetables and eliminate middlemen and wastage of foods. The Delegation also mentioned the national food plan which had been established to distribute more than 4,000,000 boxes of nutritious foods to 700,000 needy families in urban and other areas, and had also initiated consumer education programmes to address food and nutrition problems.

142. The Delegation of Cuba drew attention to the results of the Second Workshop discussions on this problem, at which there was general agreement to make an integrated approach to the analysis of the subject. It also stated that Cuba did not have problems with itinerant sellers of foods and had taken other measures of a socio-economic nature to solve urbanization problems. Taking into account the complexity of the problem which was aggravated by the present international economic crisis, the Delegation offered to share its experience with other Delegations in future activities, including workshops, seminars, etc.

143. In summing up this agenda item, the Chairman pointed out that food problems related to urbanization were complex, and careful assessment of situations were needed before proper interventions could be taken. The need was expressed for further consideration of urbanization problems by the Coordinating Committee.

Agenda Item 9 (i)

CONSIDERATIONS OF THE NEED TO ELABORATE WORLD-WIDE OR REGIONAL STANDARDS FOR:

PROCESSED AND SEMI-PROCESSED PRODUCTS FROM TROPICAL RAW MATERIALS

144. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/6 - Part I - Consideration of the Need to Elaborate World-wide and/or Regional Standards for Processed and Semi-Processed Products from Tropical Raw Materials.

145. The Committee noted at its previous session it had discussed the need for developing Codex Standards for Tropical Fresh Fruit and Vegetables, a topic which on the recommendation of the Commission at its 15th Session (ALINORM 83/43 Para. 94) was being considered generally by the Codex Coordinating Committees.

146. The Committee also noted that, in the opinion of the Coordinating Committee for Africa, all forms of presentation of tropical fruits and vegetables with potential for export should be considered, whether processed, dried, canned, by-products or in their fresh state.

147. With regard to fresh fruits and vegetables the Committee noted that at the 15th Session of the Commission the Delegations of Brazil, Cuba, Mexico and New Zealand had been in favour of and expressed the need for the development of international standards for tropical fresh fruits and vegetables. The Committee also recalled that this matter had been discussed extensively at its last Session. (Paras. 136-143 of ALINORM 85/36). Since such time the Coordinating Committee for Africa had discussed the matter and was in favour of developing standards for such products. The Committee noted that of the four Regional Committees, two (Europe, Asia) were opposed and two were in favour (Latin America and the Caribbean and Africa) of developing these standards.

148. The Delegation of Mexico repeated the offer it had made when the matter had been discussed by the 31st Session of the Executive Committee to host a new Committee on Tropical Fresh Fruits and Vegetables should the Commission establish such a Committee.

149. The Delegation of Mexico was of the opinion that the Commission should be advised that the standards for fresh fruits and vegetables would be of great importance to developing countries as a promotional tool to increase exports of these products. The Delegation also felt that data on production and trade volume (extra regional trade) should be presented to the Commission to substantiate this view. The Delegation of Mexico agreed to compile a document with such trade data and requested the assistance of other countries of the Region and the Codex Secretariat to supply detailed data.

150. The statement of the Delegation of Mexico was supported by the Delegates of Cuba and Brazil.

151. The Committee agreed with the kind offer of Mexico to prepare the background document and noted that this matter would be taken up at the 16th Session of the Commission.

152. With regard to processed and semi-processed products from tropical raw materials, the Secretariat document had pointed out that this broader aspect of standardization had already been covered to some extent through the Codex Commodity Committees. In addition, codes of hygienic practice and Codes of Practice had been developed which covered a number of tropical products. In some cases it might be desirable to develop standards for products at present covered by Codes of Practice. The Delegation of Argentina repeated its support for the elaboration of World-wide Standards for Tropical Fruits and Vegetables.

Agenda Item 9 (iii)

CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO ELABORATE WORLD-WIDE OR REGIONAL STANDARDS FOR RAW SUGAR

153. The Delegation of Cuba presented Document CX 85/6 Part I - Add. 1 and recalled that during the Third Session of CCLAC, the Cuban Delegation had expressed its readiness to offer the Fourth Session of the Committee the necessary background for that Committee to examine the desirability of elaborating a regional standard for raw sugar.

154. In this regard, the Delegation of Cuba brought to the Committee's attention the fact that bearing in mind the data on intra-regional trade in refined sugar, as well as the technological differences for sugar production in the various countries, it would be appropriate to propose a study of this matter by way of a questionnaire to all countries in the Region before formulating a final proposal to the Commission.

155. In response to a question by the Secretariat, the Delegation of Cuba indicated that this product is being marketed world-wide, so that if the Committee were to elaborate a regional standard, it could become later a World-wide Codex Standard.

156. The Representative of the Group of Sugar-Exporting Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (GLACSEC) expressed its support for the elaboration of a regional standard for raw sugar, given the importance of trade in this product at the regional level, and expressed its organization's willingness to cooperate with these aims and provide the needed documentation.

157. The Delegation of Brazil expressed its support for the proposal by the Delegation of Cuba, contained in the referenced document.

158. The Regional Coordinator concluded that given the support expressed, it was deemed appropriate to begin work on the elaboration of a standard for this product.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO ELABORATE WORLD-WIDE OR REGIONAL STANDARDS FOR SHARK FINS

159. The Secretariat presented Documents CX/LA 85/6 Part III and CX/LA 85/6 Part III, Add. 1 and recalled to the Committee that the Third Session of the Committee had agreed that Cuba would prepare a document for examination by the Committee at its Fourth Session.

160. It was noted that this document contains the quality specifications standardized in Cuba for dried shark fins as well as other questions relating to the variety of shark species that live in the waters of the Region and the fact that production is not costly. It was also pointed out that an assessment had been made of dried shark fin quality in Cuba and that high quality had been found in comparison with similar products on the world market.

161. The document also included the import and export data on shark fins contained in FAO statistics.

162. Finally, the Secretariat recommended the advisability of elaborating a regional standard for dried shark fins.

163. The Delegation of Mexico supported the proposal and highlighted the economic benefits this would entail for the countries that marketed this product in the Region. It delivered to the Secretariat a document that would be used as a primary source for the elaboration of that Standard.

164. The Delegation of Brazil believed it appropriate to support the elaboration of this Standard.

165. The Secretariat called attention to the fact that this product is in high demand internationally and that it seemed advisable to elaborate a World-wide Codex Standard for dried shark fins, but on the other hand, the Committee was reminded that the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products could not take on any new tasks because, as it had stated in its last meeting, it had a considerable volume of work before it at this time.

166. The Committee agreed to bring these opinions to the Commission's attention at its next Session and suggest that it begin elaboration of a regional standard.

CONSIDERATION OF THE NEED TO ELABORATE A CODEX CODE OF HYGIENIC PRACTICE FOR AQUACULTURE

167. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/6 Part III - Add. 1 relating to the proposal to elaborate a code of technological and hygienic practice for aquaculture. The Secretariat pointed out the importance of the cultivation of marine and freshwater species of fish as a food source, as well as the interest of many countries of the Region in developing this activity.

168. It was noted that in the last Session of the Committee it had been agreed to forward these proposals to the CCFPP (see ALINORM 85/36, Para. 169); that Committee took note and proposed to submit it to the Commission at its 16th Session.

169. Several Delegations (Argentina, Brazil, Mexico, Peru and Venezuela) expressed their support for the document presented for consideration by the Committee and considered it desirable for the Coordinating Committee to begin work in this direction.

170. The Secretariat pointed out that in the elaboration of this Code, participation by both the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene and the Codex Committee on Fish and Fishery Products would be required, since it would entail both technological and hygienic aspects.

171. It was pointed out to the Committee that if it were not possible for the above-mentioned Codex Committees to undertake this work immediately, they could request support from the Fisheries Department of FAO, given the fact that the scope of the Code surpasses regional boundaries.

172. The Committee agreed to begin work on the elaboration of this Code in coordination with the above-mentioned Committees and with the support of the Fisheries Department of FAO.

Agenda Item 10

ACTIVITIES RELATED TO PESTICIDES AND THEIR RESIDUES IN FOODS

Code of Conduct for the Distribution and Use of Pesticides

173. The Committee was informed that the above Code which had been elaborated by FAO had been endorsed by the Committee on Agriculture (COAG) with slight amendments and would be considered later in the year by the FAO Council and Conference for approval as an international document. The Delegations of Argentina, Brazil and Cuba informed the Committee that they were in favour of the Code.

Regional Problems Related to Standardization of MRLs in Foods

174. The Committee had before it Working Paper CX/LA 85/7 which contained information on activities related to pesticides and their residues in foods.

175. The Secretariat provided a brief outline of the structure of CCPR, its Terms of Reference and on other Committees which provided technical inputs to CCPR. Detailed information was available on publications, reports and working papers.

176. The Committee was informed that the 6th and 7th Sessions of the Working Group on Pesticide Residue Problems in Developing Countries had developed new recommendations in addition to those already endorsed by the Commission. The recommendations of the 6th Session were contained in Appendix II to CX/LA 85/7.

177. The Committee was also informed that Dr. V. Tolosa had been elected Chairman of the Working Group, as well as being Regional Vice-Chairman for Latin America and the Caribbean. A summary of salient points discussed was presented by the Delegation of Argentina on behalf of Dr. Tolosa.

178. The above Working Group had considered 26 replies to a questionnaire on technical and manpower resources received from member countries, including industrialized countries. The Working Group had noted that the questionnaire as presently formulated had not provided sufficient information on all important aspects and had therefore decided that it be re-drafted and re-issued.

179. Dr. Tolosa's report contained the following important observations of interest to the Region.

- "(i) The number of Latin American and Caribbean countries attending the meetings of the Codex Committees on Pesticide Residues continues to decrease. We have therefore added the following to the already existing recommendations:

New Recommendation

Urges that FAO and WHO and other international organizations provide funds in order to facilitate attendance in the Codex meetings of delegates from a greater number of developing countries and thus contribute to a more effective contribution from those countries to the Commission in general and to the work of the CCPR in particular.

Recommendation (4), last sentence

Assessment facilities should also be identified and developed in order to organize studies related to health, and international or bilateral financial assistance should be provided to the countries of the Region.

Recommendation (3), new addition

This assistance should include the allocation of funds to purchase and instal modern analytical equipment and to train analysts in their use, as well as maintenance personnel, the establishment of central and branch laboratories in various regions and the provision of reagents and reference materials for pesticides and their metabolites.

- (ii) It is considered necessary to establish a "workshop" on pesticide problems in the Region, prior to the next meeting of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean. There is an urgent need - with the aid of experts from the countries - for: a revision of the use of pesticides that are marketed without toxicological data to guarantee them; an analysis of Document CX/PR 84/8 on national practices - it is understood that the countries of the Region must be cautious in the acceptances contained in that Document; the elaboration of a joint cooperation project among technical agencies of the countries, to be presented then to FAO and/or WHO for financial aid and coordination. I shall work on this latter because I believe it is the most effective for our countries.
- (iii) As a result of the joint cooperation project, there will be a greater possibility that FAO, WHO and other international agencies provide financial aid for the establishment of central and branch laboratories in the countries in order to meet the needs of the Region with regard to pesticide residues."

180. The Secretariat informed the Committee of a meeting of a group of Developing Countries in Asia concerning Pesticide Residue Problems which had met in Petchburi, Thailand in conjunction with the Fourth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Asia (ALINORM 85/31). That meeting had established specific recommendations in the form of a resolution concerning acceptances of Codex MRLs and ERLs by governments, addressed both to developing countries and international organizations.

181. The Coordinating Committee for Africa, at its most recent Session, had endorsed the above resolution. It had also agreed that it was important for developing countries to establish an appropriate legal framework and regulations for the control of pesticide residues. This was thought to act as a deterrent to the marketing of foods with excessive pesticide residues, even in the absence of adequate food control facilities.

182. The Delegation of Venezuela supported the report given by the Delegation of Argentina and the new recommendations contained in Appendix II to CX/LA 85/7. The Delegation referred to the need for simplified methods of analysis for pesticides to overcome the high costs of sophisticated methodology. The Secretariat informed the Committee that the Working Group on Methods of Analysis of the CCPR had indicated that certain simplified methods were suitable for a limited number of pesticides which would be published as an appendix to the report of CCPR's 17th Session.

183. The Delegation of Uruguay stated that an inter-ministerial committee, established by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, had examined contaminants and biological residues in meat and was continuing this work on agricultural products. A national survey on pesticide residues in meat had been carried out by the same Ministry.

184. The Observer of IOCU informed the Committee that there was world-wide concern on the indiscriminate use of pesticides and that therefore an International Network of Action had been formed (PAN). A Seminar had been held by IOCU in Latin America with the participation of all Latin American countries, as well as the United States, Canada and several European countries. From the information received, it was evident that the misuse of pesticides had created an alarming situation with regard to human and animal health and the environment. To control the situation a plan of action had been established which made recommendations which included the use of biological control measures and the control of pesticides and all agritoxical substances.

185. The Delegation of Mexico pointed out that an effective application of the recommendations required an appropriate infrastructure and that large resources had already been committed to pesticide residue control, including both legislative and technical matters. The Delegation stated that much more had to be done and requested the technical support of the Commission. The Delegation of Mexico stated that it had compiled lists of pesticides used in tropical fruits and vegetables.

186. The Delegation of Cuba reiterated its support to the recommendations of the Working Group and drew attention to the need for a multi-sectorial approach. The Delegation also stated that Cuban standards for pesticides had been elaborated. Referring to the report of Dr. Tolosa, the Delegation of Cuba felt that a consultant was needed to define lists of pesticides for use in tropical and sub-tropical products.

187. The Delegation also supported fully the proposal to hold a Workshop on Pesticide Residues and their Trade Implications in connection with the Committee in order to further inter-regional communications on pesticide use.

188. The Delegation of Brazil stressed the particular importance of the working groups to developing countries and agreed with their recommendations.

189. The Committee decided to endorse both the recommendations of the 6th and 7th meetings of the CCPR Working Group on Pesticide Residues in problems in developing countries, the resolution of the Meeting of Asian countries at Petchburi and the important remarks of Venezuela on methodology. The Committee expressed its satisfaction that the Code of Conduct had been endorsed by COAG.

Agenda Item 11

CONSIDERATION OF POSSIBLE IMPROVEMENTS TO THE WORKING MECHANISMS OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

190. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/8 which contained the principal ideas set forth by the Regional Coordinator in the 31st Session of the Executive Committee of the Commission held in Geneva from 25-29 June 1984 on the question of the need and desirability of considering the working mechanisms of the organization with a view to improving them in order to increase the organization's efficiency and achieve greater participation by developing countries in its activities.
191. The Committee learned that the basic proposals made had to do with the establishment of a technical programme for the Commission and its subsidiary bodies that would contain in a planned manner the short, medium and long-term lines of work in the organization, as well as the consideration of mechanisms for participation in subsidiary bodies, mechanisms for accepting Codex documents, technical and financial aid to countries, the elaboration of rules of procedure for work on Codex documents and the preparation of much clearer guidelines for the work of the Regional Coordinating Committees than those currently in effect.
192. The Delegation of Mexico expressed its support for the Document presented by the Secretariat of the Coordinator, bearing in mind the need for the Commission to reorient its work in order to aid the developing countries in the sphere of standardization and to restructure the working mechanisms in order to facilitate participation by all members in the Commission's activities.
193. In this light, the Delegation of Mexico made several proposals linked to the need for an annual programme of work that would contain calendars of meetings and the provisional programmes of those meetings.
194. The Delegation of Mexico also spoke on the need for an annual directory, circular letters that periodically update information on Codex documents, the establishment of concrete assistance programmes between the developed and developing country members of the Commission and the need for Committee host countries to allocate technical and financial support for seminars, courses, workshops, etc., on specific topics of interest for the developing countries within the sphere of each Committee.
195. The Delegation of Mexico considered it prudent to recommend as well the need to establish, both in the Commission and in other International Agencies, a subsidiary body devoted to the study of the needs of developing countries as related to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, so that they may receive the support they need to participate satisfactorily in that work.
196. The Delegations of Brazil and Argentina went on record in support of the Document presented by the Secretariat of the Coordinator and also supported the proposals of the Delegation of Mexico, considering that they reinforce the afore-mentioned ideas.
197. Speaking on behalf of the Secretariat of the Commission, Dr. Käferstein suggested that, in order to implement the ideas on holding workshops prior to the meeting of the Regional Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean, it would be advisable for the member states to support these proposals in the corresponding bodies of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) in order to obtain the support needed from those agencies.
198. Having considered all the deliberations on this matter, the Committee agreed to accept the recommendations in general and especially the recommendations that these ideas should be considered by the Committee on General Principles of the Commission for analysis. The Secretariat pointed out that the future work of the Commission was an important subject for discussion at its 16th Session and the recommendations of the Committee would also be considered at that time.

Agenda Item 12

CONSIDERATION OF WHETHER THERE IS TOO MUCH DETAIL IN CERTAIN CODEX STANDARDS AND WHETHER SOME PARTS OF THESE STANDARDS COULD BE MADE OPTIONAL

199. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/9 which set forth previous discussions on this subject in the Executive Committee and at the 15th Session of the Commission. The Committees on Processed Fruits and Vegetables and on Fish and Fishery Products had also discussed this matter. The Committee noted that the subject would be further discussed at the 16th Session of the Commission in the light of a document prepared by a consultant. Comments on this matter had also been requested from Coordinating Committees.

200. The Delegation of Cuba confirmed its opinion that excessive detail could lead to difficulties at the acceptance stage of standards, but nevertheless did not think that parts of Codex Standards should be optional. This would have a negative effect on the implementation of the Standards. The Delegation of Cuba felt that a decision on the amount of detail included in a Standard should be left to the responsible Codex Committee.

201. The Delegation of Mexico supported the above view and recommended that it should be transmitted to the Commission. The Standards for Processed Fruits and Vegetables and for Fish and Fishery Products should be analyzed to determine whether there was indeed too much detail and which detail, if any, could be transferred to an annex to the Standard. Another solution was to adopt the Standard concerned with specified deviations.

202. The Delegation of Argentina informed the Committee of Argentina's position which had already been submitted to the Codex Secretariat. The Delegation was of the view that Standards should not contain superfluous details such as styles, percentages and defect tables. The Delegation of Argentina was opposed to inclusion of optional provisions which could represent an obstacle to trade. The Delegation of Argentina was of the opinion that the Standards adopted for international trade should contain minimum requirements for composition and quality. Additional requirements could be added later by separate agreement of contracting parties on an ad hoc basis. These details need not necessarily have been approved by the relevant Committees. Argentina was of the opinion that if these details could have an adverse effect in international trade, they should be eliminated from the Standards, but should remain associated with them as optional provisions.

203. The Delegation of Peru was of the opinion that all provisions of the Standards should be mandatory.

204. The Delegation of Brazil believed that the details of the individual Standard depended on the nature of the product and its distribution in world trade. For this reason, it was necessary to include sufficient detail to assure that the interests of the members of the Commission were protected. He was of the opinion that provisions in Codex Standards should be mandatory.

205. The Delegation of Venezuela supported the views expressed by Cuba and Brazil especially with regard to the technical details. In view of the opinions expressed by Delegations, the Committee decided to express to the Commission its opinion that Codex Standards which contained a mandatory and an optional section could not be accepted: Codex Standards should be of a mandatory nature and thus strengthen the objectives of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

Agenda Item 13

HOSTING OF CODEX SESSIONS IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

206. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/10 on the above topic. The Committee noted that this question had first been discussed at the 14th Session of the Commission. Subsequently at its 15th Session, the Commission had available replies to a circular letter issued by the Secretariat inviting developing countries to indicate whether they were interested in hosting Codex Sessions. Positive replies had been received from Argentina, Cuba, Thailand and Zambia. At the same meeting, delegations from host countries

had explained the problems as they saw them and it was agreed that the Secretariat should write to countries which host Codex Sessions, enquiring whether they would be agreeable to transferring a Session of the Committee(s) to a developing country. The replies so far indicated that budgetary and organization difficulties presented a major obstacle to the transfer of a Session at the present time. No firm offer to transfer a Session had been received.

207. The Delegation of Cuba reiterated its support to holding Sessions of Codex Committees in developing countries. It indicated that the Committees of interest were those for Pesticide Residues, Food Additives, Vegetable Proteins and Food Labelling.

208. The Delegation of Mexico thought that it was useful to hold Codex Sessions in developing countries and that all efforts should be made by the present host countries of the Committees concerned to this effect.

209. The Delegation of Argentina stated that, bearing in mind the history of previous attempts to achieve practical results, it would not renew its previously expressed interest until such time as there was evidence that the offer to host Codex Sessions in developing countries was feasible.

210. The Delegation of Brazil stated that it was important to hold Codex Sessions in developing countries, but was unable to offer host facilities at the present time.

Agenda Item 14

EXAMINATION OF THE PROPOSAL TO AMEND RULE VI.3 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE OF THE COMMISSION

211. The Committee had before it Document CX/LA 85/11 on the above subject. It noted that the 15th Session of the Commission had before it a proposal of the Executive Committee to amend Rule VI.3 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, which are to be found in the Procedural Manual of the Commission. The amendment proposed by the Executive Committee was as follows (words underlined to be added and words in square brackets [] to be deleted):

Rule VI.3

"At the request of a majority of the Members of the Commission constituting a given region or a group of countries that a standard be elaborated, the standard concerned shall, if the Commission so determines, be elaborated as a standard primarily intended for that region or group of countries. When a vote is taken on the [elaboration], amendment or adoption of a draft standard, primarily intended for a region or group of countries, only Members belonging to that region or group of countries may take part in the voting. The adoption of the standard may, however, take place only after submission of the draft text to all Members of the Commission for comments. The provisions of this paragraph shall not prejudice the elaboration or adoption of a corresponding standard with a different territorial scope."

Under Rule IV.6 of the Rules of Procedure of the Commission "the majority of the Members of the Commission shall constitute a quorum for the purposes of making recommendations for amendments to the Statutes of the Commission and of adopting amendments of, or additions to, the present Rules in accordance with Rule XIII.1"

As 122 countries were Members of the Commission at the time of its 15th Session (July 1983), the quorum needed to amend the Rules was 62 countries. Since there were not 62 countries represented at the Session, the Commission decided to postpone consideration of this subject until such time as there might be a quorum. The Commission decided to put this matter on the agenda of its 16th Session to be held in July 1985.

The purpose of the amendment proposed by the Executive Committee is to place the final decision on whether or not a regional standard should be elaborated in the hands of the Commission, in order that the Commission should remain fully master of its own programme of work. Another view held by some countries is that if a majority of the

member countries of a region attach importance to the elaboration of a standard for the region concerned, it would not be right for member countries outside the region to prevent them from doing so. This view supports the Rule as it stands at present.

Under the Rules of Procedure of the Commission, a two-thirds majority of the votes cast would be required to change the Rule.

212. The Delegation of Argentina maintained its already stated position that the development of the regional standard for certain products was useful and that the Commission should decide on such standards. However, it acknowledged that it was useful for a region to be able to elaborate regional standards for raw materials which moved exclusively or almost exclusively in inter-regional trade. At the decision of members of the Region, the Delegation of Argentina therefore supported the amendment of Rule VI.3.

213. The Delegation of Brazil restated its favourable attitude to the amendment of Rule VI.3 as reported to the 15th Session of the Commission.

214. The Delegation of Cuba did not see any conflict between the present Rule VI.3 and the authority of the Commission. The Delegation pointed out that of the 200 standards developed by the Commission, only 10 were regional. It was of the opinion that the development of regional standards should, with the approval of the Commission be left in the hands of the Regional Coordinating Committees. The Delegation of Cuba did therefore not support the amendment of Rule VI.3.

215. The Delegation of Mexico stated that the matter had been given careful consideration by the Mexican Codex Committee, but that the Committee had not been able to assess all the implications. The Delegation of Mexico felt that a region should have the faculty to elaborate regional standards. However, there should be no duplication of standardization work between the different regions. The Committee noted that the present working mechanism did in practice provide sufficient safeguards to avoid such a situation. The Delegation of Mexico was against the proposed amendment.

216. The Committee recognized that this was a complex matter and decided not to take a decision at the moment but to keep the subject under review and to examine it further at its Fifth Session if necessary.

Agenda Item 15

FUTURE WORK

217. The Committee agreed that amongst other items and matters referred to it by the Commission and other Committees, the agenda for the Fifth Session of the Committee would include the following:

- (i) Report on FAO and WHO/PAHO activities relating to the work of the Commission;
- (ii) Report on the 2nd and 3rd Workshops;
- (iii) Report on the progress of work undertaken by the Coordinator;
- (iv) Examination of Regional Standards for Raw Sugar and Shark Fins;
- (v) Examination of a Code of Practice for Aquaculture;
- (vi) Review of Acceptances;
- (vii) Activities related to Pesticides and their Residues in Foods;
- (viii) Consideration of the Future Direction of the Commission;

- (ix) Progress in Food Safety - Country Reports;
- (x) Exchange of Information on Foodborne Disease Surveillance;
- (xi) Consideration of Food Control Problems related to Urbanization.

Agenda Item 16

OTHER MATTERS

Use of Spanish Language

218. The Committee had before it a Document on the above subject prepared by Argentina.

219. In presenting this document, the Delegation outlined the history of the use of the Spanish language within the subsidiary bodies of the Commission. It emphasized the work of the countries of the Region and of Spain which deserved special mention because of its valuable and tenacious efforts on the matter both within Codex and in other international fora.

220. The Committee noted that since its last Session the Secretariat had written to Committees where Spanish interpretation was not provided and as a result the Government of the Netherlands had indicated that in future Spanish interpretation would be provided at Sessions of the Codex Committee on Food Additives. It also noted that the other governments were considering the provision of similar facilities.

221. The Committee noted the decision of the Government of the Netherlands with great satisfaction and after some discussion it was agreed that the Coordinators would transmit the following proposal formulated by the Delegation of Argentina.

"To raise, in the 16th Session of the Joint FAO/WHO Commission in 1985, the need for the agency to request that the Governments of the Federal Republic of Germany, Denmark, and Hungary provide respectively for the 1986 Committee meetings they will host, Spanish language simultaneous interpretation of the deliberations and Spanish translations of the working papers.

To that effect, those countries should communicate, by the end of October 1985, at the latest, the final decision of their Governments.

For their part, the Spanish-speaking developing countries commit themselves to inform on whether they will participate in those deliberations 30 days in advance of the event. If by that deadline, the host government does not receive at least two positive communications, it will be relieved of its commitment to provide Spanish interpretation.

In order to facilitate the above, the developing countries should be familiar with the agenda of each meeting at least 60 days in advance, in order to assess, given the economic outlay it would entail, the advisability of sending technical personnel to the meeting.

The Commission should ask the Secretariat to provide translation into Spanish, when required, as well as the printing, and distribution to the Spanish-speaking countries, of all the regulations that shall be considered by the Committees that do not have working documents drafted in Spanish.

It should be decided that all future Codex Committees, without exception, be they new meetings or meetings suspended sine die and resumed - provide Spanish interpretation during the deliberations and supply Spanish translations of the documents as well."

National Programme on Food Protection in Argentina

222. The Delegation of Argentina informed the Committee of the Argentinian National Programme on Food Protection which had been formulated by the Ministry of Health and Social Actions in collaboration with WHO/PAHO. (See Para. 84 (iii) of this Report).

223. The Delegation of Argentina briefly outlined the salient points of the programme. The Committee noted that Argentina was firmly supporting the principle that food safety was a basic component of primary health care and understood that it constituted a fundamental tool to arrive at the aim "Health for All". For the purpose of controlling the growing deterioration of monitoring systems with associated economic aspects, the National Plan for Food Protection had been formulated with the valuable technical and operational assistance of PAHO.

224. The Delegation of Argentina expressed the view that the presentation of this document to the CCLAC would help countries of the Region which were undertaking a similar exercise.

225. In conclusion, the Delegation of Argentina indicated that an evaluation of the present situation in Argentina had led to the establishment of the above objectives and relevant strategies to attain these objectives. The Delegation of Argentina indicated that all documents related to the Programme were at the disposition of interested members of the Region.

226. The Committee and the Secretariat of WHO expressed their appreciation for the excellent presentation and the outstanding quality of the document.

Agenda Item 17

NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR AND DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

227. The Committee noted that the Coordinator, Minister/President of the State Committee for Standardization of the Republic of Cuba, Ing. Ramón Darías Rodés was eligible for a second term of office, that is from the end of the 16th Session of the Commission to the end of the 17th Session of the Commission. The Committee unanimously decided to propose to the Commission that the present Coordinator be elected for a second term of office. The Delegation of Venezuela emphasized the great value of the work of the Coordinator to Latin America and the Caribbean both through his visits to countries of the Region and to international organizations to discuss the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the Coordinating Committee, and the problems of the Region.

228. The Chairman indicated his willingness to continue in the role of Coordinator and thanked the Delegations present for their support. He indicated that the Fifth Session of the Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean would be held in Havana at a date to be agreed, possibly in the first quarter of 1987. He expressed the hope that the proposed Third Workshop would also be held in connection with the Fifth Session of the Committee.

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GRUPO DE LOS PAISES LATINOAMERICANOS Y DEL
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OPENING STATEMENT (22.4.85)

by

Eng. Ramón Darías Rodes
Minister-President
Cuban State Committee for Standardization
and Regional Coordinator of the Codex Alimentarius Commission
for Latin America and the Caribbean

Esteemed,

Mr. José Ramón Yarza, Permanent Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations,

Dr. Luis Ernesto Giraldo, Ambassador, Permanent Representative of the PAHO in Cuba,

Dr. Eduardo Méndez, Vice-President of the Codex Alimentarius Commission,

Mr. James Hutchinson, FAO Joint Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission,

Dr. Friederich Kaferstein, WHO Joint Secretary of the Codex Alimentarius Commission,

Lic. Ricardo Cabrisas Ruiz, Minister of Foreign Trade of Cuba,

Lic. José Viera Linares, Minister a.e. for Foreign Affairs of Cuba,

Ambassadors and Chiefs of Missions accredited in Cuba,

Distinguished representatives of Member States, personalities and guests who honour us with your presence.

On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Cuba and in our capacity of Regional Coordinator of the Codex Alimentarius Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean, I fulfil the honourable mission of welcoming you and of showing to those who meet again with us in Cuba and those who visit us for the first time, our satisfaction for the possibility of this meeting and our thankfulness for the fact that the Fourth Meeting of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean has become a reality.

We will make our best efforts in order that the discussions and analyses of these sessions contribute more and more the links of cooperation among our countries, to continue developing the Codex Alimentarius activities and to increase accordingly the tasks of Food Standardization in the Region.

Since the closure itself of the XV Period of Sessions of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July 1983, Cuba having been elected to serve as President of the Regional Coordinating Committee, we got involved in the tasks of organizing the Third Meeting of the Committee, at which in our opinion, suitable results were basically achieved, taking into account mainly the quality of the discussions, the high level of participation and the depth in the examination of the Programme's subjects.

All along these months we have been working for fulfilling the agreements and recommendations of the Third Meeting and of the First Workshop which preceded it and, in consequence, this new meeting has been organized so that we could analyze some aspects that shall even call for the attention of the Commission at its 16th Period of Sessions to be held next July.

Likewise, with the aim that this meeting covered specific purposes of the area's activity, needs and concrete problems of our country with a higher level of accuracy, two Cuban delegations visited various countries. These visits, in addition to those made in 1983, reach a total of 15 countries visited in this period of 23 months.

Consequently, such links have enriched the work of the Coordinating Committee and facilitated the necessary understanding of our realities as regards food standardization for the benefit of the joint activity we are just carrying out.

Contacts were also established with regional and sub-regional organizations, their headquarters being located in the countries visited:

Pan-American Standards Commission (COPANT), Caribbean Common Market (CARICOM), Andean Group, Hipólito Unanue Convention, and Nutrition Institute for Central America and Panama (INCAP), Institutions with which we made fruitful exchanges of criteria in relation to our activity and, in particular, with respect to regional harmonization of standards.

One of the recommendations made by the participating countries at the last meeting was the convenience for the Coordinating Committee to systematically hold meetings, workshops or technical seminars prior to the events of the Committee.

Hence, the managerial staff of the Pan-American Health Organization (PAHO), being aware of the lively interest of our countries and analyzing the links of Codex Alimentarius activities with the objectives of its work, has agreed to organize for a second time a workshop on food standardization and health for Latin America and the Caribbean, which was successfully closed yesterday evening.

We believe it fair and necessary to show the deep gratitude of all of us to this prestigious organization of the Americas which has demonstrated once more its full conviction with regard to the problems concerning food protection and health, as well as its technical and organizational efficiency, making above all a great and valuable financial effort to achieve the success of the recently closed Second Workshop, and to ensure beforehand that of the Fourth Meeting we are opening today.

During the period elapsed, we attended the 31st Meeting of the Codex Commission Executive Committee, held at the headquarters of the World Health Organization, at which we gave a brief information on the results of the Third Meeting of the Coordinating Committee, as well as on those of the Workshop.

In addition, and at the request of the President of the Commission, we submitted a document containing the preliminary ideas on feasible mechanisms aimed at improving the Commission's works in order to achieve a more effective, dynamic and active participation of developing countries in the light of the re-orientation of the works already carried out by the Commission. Within the Programme of this meeting, we can examine a similar document which is likely to be enriched with the valuable contributions of the distinguished delegations attending this meeting.

At its 31st Meeting, the Executive Committee openly acknowledged the World Health Organization for its initiative of sponsoring and supporting technical meetings previous to the meetings of the Coordinating Committee. At the same time, the new denomination of our Committee was analyzed and, just as we proposed last year, the Executive Committee agreed to submit to the Commission in its 16th Period of Sessions the name of "Codex Regional Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean".

Taking advantage of our stay at the headquarters of the World Health Organization, we had the opportunity to talk with Dr. Hamon, Vice-Director General of WHO, and to tell him the points of our countries as regards the common approach of the activity carried out by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, as well as the goal of "Health for All by the Year 2000", which constitutes an action guide for WHO. In this respect, we must point out that we have found a singular receptivity and the willingness already evidenced on previous

occasions by the World Health Organization to actively work in order to continue strengthening Codex tasks.

We also established contacts with the managerial staff of the International Trade Centre (CCI/UNCTAD/GATT) and, particularly with its Director-General, Dr. Goram Engblom, to whom we expressed the interest shown by the countries which met in Havana last year in attaining the technical and financial support of that Institution in order to promote a Regional Draft for harmonization of Regional and Sub-Regional Food Standards with Codex Standards, in the certainty that this would be another measure which should contribute to attain fair practices within food trade in the Region.

Likewise, we found receptivity and welcome to such idea at the International Trade Centre, and recently we received the visit to Cuba of Dr. Engblom, with whom we had the opportunity of exchanging criteria in relation to these problems.

During the development of this event we could examine the subject in question in more detail.

At this stage, we have kept in closer working contact with officers from the Codex Secretariat, who have reiterated once and again their support to the tasks of this Coordinating Committee, maintaining their willingness and concrete, receptive, comprehensive action to take into account the requests and suggestions of our countries.

All this is evidenced mainly in the organization of this Fourth Meeting, in the drawing-up of the working documents jointly prepared in some cases, and in the arrangements made to improve the activity of the Coordinating Committee.

Esteemed Delegates and Guests,

As we stated in the opening speech of the Third Meeting of the Coordinating Committees, we are before the need for developing various and important tasks regarding the economic and trading problems of the Region. The reflections that will arise during these days at this event could not leave aside the economic situation of Latin America and the Caribbean, which - as it has been recognized by prestigious personalities and organizations of the Region - is now facing its most serious economic crisis since the Great Depression of the 30's.

High external debts, growing deterioration of the exchange terms, fabulous interest figures, monetary-financial policy, galloping inflation, protectionist formulae, unemployment, and some other factors reflect a deep crisis and an extremely complex economic and social situation.

All of us should and can be united more and more in order to fight together for the development and for a new economic order, for that new World Economic Order which was agreed upon solemnly at the United Nations ten years ago.

In this context, in which many appeals were made to strengthen the economic integration and the unity of the Region in order to face together common problems, we realize that our activity can make some modest contributions to the struggle carried out on the basis of these premises.

Without setting aside the consideration of those aspects, we notice with satisfaction that some of the main objectives that the Committee had planned out during its Third Meeting have already started to be materialized, and this evidences the willingness of member countries to fulfil the compromises acquired to put forward these tasks.

The creation and strengthening of the National Committees in different countries of the Region, as well as the registration of new members of the area in the Commission, constitute some of the successes attained during this period, which demonstrate that it is possible to advance even under difficult and complex conditions, when links are tightened and willingness joined together.

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APPENDIX II

We trust that this new meeting of the Committee, its discussions and resolutions will serve to increase its participation in Codex Alimentarius activities, as well as in those of food standardization in general.

We sincerely thank your presence and reiterate you our conviction that with the support, the enthusiasm and the assistance of all of us, this will prove to be a fruitful meeting for our countries.

Thank you very much.

Havana, Cuba
17.04.85