

codex alimentarius commission



FOOD AND AGRICULTURE
ORGANIZATION
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JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

30th Session

Rome, Italy, 2 - 7 July 2007

**REPORT OF THE 15th SESSION OF THE
FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**

Mar del Plata, Argentina

13 - 17 November 2006

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The 15th session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean reached the following conclusions:

MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:

The Coordinating Committee:

Review of regional coordinating committees

- agreed with the recommendations of the 28th Session of the Commission regarding the role and activities of regional coordinating committees (para. 7).

Strategic Plan 2008-2013 of the Commission

- made some specific considerations to attend regional concerns in regard to pesticide residues as well as other more general considerations while retaining the right to coordinate with its Members in order to provide additional comments on the restructuring of Codex and the Commission's Strategic Plan that would be submitted to the Executive Committee and the Commission (paras. 10 - 20).

Structure and mandates of Codex committees and task forces

- endorsed proposals 5, 6, 9 and 11 and made comments on the remaining proposals (paras. 21 - 35).

Nomination of Coordinator

- unanimously agreed that Mexico be appointed as Regional Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean and that Argentina be selected as Member of the Executive Committee for the Latin America and the Caribbean region (para. 124).

MATTERS REFERRED TO CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

Committee on General Principles

The Coordinating Committee:

Terms of reference of regional coordinating committees

- supported the endorsement of the amendment to its Terms of Reference and recommended that member countries conveyed this position to the relevant fora (para. 8).

Respective roles of regional coordinators and members of the Executive Committee elected on a geographical basis

- considered that this matter should be clarified in the Procedural Manual and should continue to be discussed at the Committee on General Principles for the maximum benefit of the Commission and its regions (para. 9).

OTHER MATTERS OF INTEREST

The Coordinating Committee:

Activities of FAO and WHO complementary to the work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, including capacity building

- took note of the FAO and WHO activities being developed in this area at national, regional and international level (paras. 36 - 42).

Conclusions and recommendations of the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for the Americas and the Caribbean - Follow-up actions

- endorsed the recommendations and conclusions of the Conference, took note of the various capacity building activities being developed as follow-up to these recommendations and recognized that some of them have been already addressed under the different objectives of the Regional Strategic Plan and the Agenda of the Committee (paras. 43 - 44);
- agreed to conduct pilot studies on risk analysis case studies in different combinations of food-pathogen as another follow-up activity to the recommendations of the Conference (para. 44);
- recognized the importance of having diet studies of the Region for the development of risk exposure assessment and the establishment of MRLs regionally representative and agreed on the need for developing a strategy on diet studies (both food safety and nutrition) for the Region (paras. 44 - 45);

- o endorsed a project on a *Platform for improving food safety and quality in Latin America and the Caribbean* to obtain training and financial resources for capacity building and implementation of sanitary measures and requested governments of the Region to submit proposals for national, sub-regional and regional activities to donors and international agencies (paras. 46 and 84).

Information on national food control systems and consumer participation in food standards setting

- took note of recent developments and current status on food legislation, food control, national Codex structures and consumer participation in countries of the Region (paras. 48 - 57).

Information on use of Codex standards at national and regional level

- took note of the adoption, implementation and use of Codex standards and related texts in countries of the Region (paras. 58 - 65).

Regional Strategic Plan

- agreed to upload on the CCLAC web page a questionnaire for comments and information on the objectives of the Regional Strategic Plan that should be completed no later than **19 January 2007** (para. 67).
- took note of the progress made in the development of the objectives and the activities carried out in accordance with the Objectives of the Regional Strategic Plan in particular:

Objective 1 - Communication

- o highlighted the results reached in improving communication by using both Spanish and English in the exchange of information within the Region, including the CCLAC webpage, and encouraged Members to review their data on Codex contact points and to notify any change to the Codex Secretariat and the CCLAC Coordinator (para. 68);
- o agreed that Argentina continued to host and update the CCLAC webpage and took note of the various suggestions to improve the page in compliance with this Objective (para. 69);
- o congratulated the Coordinator on having achieved the establishment and use of virtual chat rooms and emphasized the need to archive the chat sessions and to announce them well in advance the sessions (para. 70);
- o established 3 levels of fora on the CCLAC webpage namely: level 1 - Codex contact points; level 2 - public administration (intergovernmental) and level 3 - free access (civil society) as described in Annex III of this report (para. 71).

Objective 2 - Effective participation of Members

- o stressed the need for information exchange to help the understanding of Codex matters and the development of national positions (para. 73);
- o agreed on the distribution of questionnaires to follow-up on the effective participation of Members of the Region in the work and meetings of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies that would be made available on the CCLAC webpage (paras. 73 and 75).

Objective 3 - Strengthening of capacities

- o encouraged international organizations and donor countries to provide training on subjects prioritized by the Committee to attend its needs (para. 76);
- o took note of a long-distance training course being developed with the assistance of the Codex Secretariat to improve participation of Members of the Region in the work of Codex (para. 77);
- o reiterated the need for Members of the Region to receive cross-training from FAO/WHO/WTO and encouraged these organizations to develop joint crash courses aimed at Codex focal points who should be responsible for their organization and publishing (para. 78);

Objective 4 - Use of technical and scientific capacities

- o recognized the increase in the demand for regional experts to address specific needs of Members of the Region and suggested that in the selection of experts for scientific advice the FAO/WHO criteria should be taken into account while continuing to discuss this matter among its Members (para. 80).

Objective 5 - Continuity of the Committee's tasks

- o recognized the excellent work done by Argentina in the implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan and agreed that it should be linked with the Commission Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (paras. 81 - 82).

Objective 6 - Technical and financial cooperation

- o encouraged Members of the Region to cooperate at bilateral or regional level to take advantage of the capacities available in the Region for the resolution of member countries needs and urged Members of the Region to consider using funds from regional organizations or other donors and financial sources that allowed for the development of programmes or joint developments (para. 83).

Objective 7 - Identification and prioritization of regional standard-related needs

- o noted that this objective had fostered the discussion of matters of regional interest in addition to those already identified in a specific Agenda item as demonstrated in the various issues to be considered under other business and future work (para. 85).

Guidelines for Food Safety in Tourist Zones

- agreed to discontinue work on this document as the available documentation in Codex, FAO, WHO and other organizations did not make necessary the development of such Guidelines but that greater efforts should be put in enforcement of food regulations and capacity building activities thus:
 - o called on Members of the Region to implement relevant Codex standards and related texts as well as FAO and WHO documents, etc. and agreed that FAO/WHO should provide technical assistance to the small and medium sized agri-food business of tourist zones, for instance, through the project Platform (paras. 90 - 91).

Issues of significance to the Region including other business and future work*Compliance with Codex MRLs and the MRL-setting needs of the Region*

- noted a number of conclusions related to compliance with Codex MRLs for pesticides by WTO/Codex member countries and recommendations concerning the setting of Codex MRLs for pesticides in products of interest to the Region (para. 97);
- expressed its concern on the situation of the establishment of Codex MRLs/pesticides vis-à-vis the work of JMPR/CCPR and its consequences for countries exports of the Region (para. 98);
- agreed to reconvene the Working Group on MRLs/Pesticides led by Brazil to continue to collect data on the combination “agrochemical/culture” of interest to the Region for which there are no Codex MRLs and to complete this information by **31 January 2007** in order to update the document presented at this session and make it available in time for the next session of CCPR (paras. 99 - 100).

Food additive Stevia rebaudiana

- expressed its disagreement on the rescheduling of the evaluation of steviol glycosides and unanimously supported the reinsertion of this compound in the list of substances scheduled for evaluation by the 2007 JECFA meeting (para. 106).

Risk Analysis Principles for application by Governments

- committed itself to continue discussing this matter with the goal of finding a common position and agreed that, if such document was moved forward in the Step Procedure and if the concept of “precaution” was to be included, this should be phrased in such a way as to make it clear that “precaution” was a qualified exception to be applied in a limited way, under strict criteria and timeframes and should not go beyond what was contained in the WTO/SPS Agreement while the terminology used must be aligned with those of the aforesaid Agreement and relevant Codex texts (paras. 110 - 111).

Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods

- reiterated its position that no further work was needed on the Code as the Principles contained therein were already addressed in the relevant WTO Agreements and Codex texts and thus supported Recommendation 2 of CCFICS regarding the use of relevant Codex texts and technical assistance to establish or strengthen national food export/import control systems in those Codex Members which such systems were not sufficient (para. 113).

FAO/WHO Trust Fund

- recognized the potential advantages of the Trust Fund although the current parameters of distribution of funds did not completely benefit the Region and made a number of recommendations to improve the efficacy of the Fund (paras. 74 and 114).

*Overlapping of topics between Codex and ISO*ISO

- agreed that relations between Codex and ISO should be synergetic and cooperative whereas collaboration, coordination and communication should be enhanced further to find areas where Codex/ISO can complement each other in order to avoid any duplication of work (para. 117).

Other private standards

- expressed its concern on the use of private standards stricter than Codex standards for market access which could cause technical obstacles to trade and agreed that the role of private standards versus Codex standards was an important issue that should be discussed within Codex (para. 118).

Antimicrobial resistance

- agreed to continue to discuss this issue, including proposals for new work to be undertaken by the Task Force and the development of regional positions, in a Working Group chaired by Brazil (para. 120).

Regional distribution of subsidiary bodies of the Commission

- noted that the current distribution of subsidiary bodies of the Commission did not allow for a balanced participation of all regions in the work of Codex and recommended governments and the Commission to take into account the concentration of Codex committees and task forces in certain regions (para. 121);
- draw the attention of Codex Members on the need for a representative geographic distribution of Codex subsidiary bodies so that, when they were available for hosting, priority should be given to countries volunteering from those regions where there were no or a few Codex committees/task forces allocated to ensure fair distribution and equal participation of Codex Members (para. 122);
- supported Argentina as host country for the Committee on Fats and Oils if the next session of the Commission decided to appoint a new host country for this Committee (para. 123).

Standard for Table Grapes

- supported the final adoption of the draft *Standard for Table Grapes* at the next session of the Commission (para. 127).

Consensus in Codex

- agreed on the importance of decisions taken by consensus and encouraged Members of the Region to consider this matter with a view to a regional position at the next session of CCGP (para. 128).

New sardine-type of Ecuador

- supported Ecuador for the inclusion of the Ecuadorian sardine “pinchagua” (*Opisthonema* spp) in the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products and set up a Working Group led by Ecuador to assist this country in the process of inclusion (para. 131).

Standardization of “Quinoa”

- supported work on standardization of “quinoa” and set up a Working Group led by Bolivia to study the documentation available in Codex with a view to determining the appropriateness to elaborate a Standard for this products at its next session (para. 132).

Standardization of “Culantro Coyote”

- supported work on standardization of “culantro coyote” and set up a Working Group led by Costa Rica to review the documentation available in Codex with a view to determining the appropriateness to elaborate a Standard for this products at its next session (para. 133).

*Standardization of “Tilapia” (*Oreochromis niloticus* y *Oreochromis aureus*)*

- supported work on standardization of “tilapia” and agreed that Costa Rica would prepare a document on this matter to determine the opportunity to develop a Standard for this product at its next session (para. 134).

Restriction on the use of clenbuterol

- stressed the need to avoid the misuse of this substance and to apply Codex MRLs and relevant texts for the use of veterinary drugs (para. 136).

Nutrition labelling

- agreed to carry out a survey on the use of nutrition labelling in countries of the Region and to discuss this matter in order to establish goals for its eventual harmonization within the Region (para. 140).

Judgement of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with food inspection and certification systems - Appendix

- agreed on a number of recommendations relating to the elaboration to the Appendix to these Guidelines (paras. 141 - 142).

INTRODUCTION

1. The 15th Session of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean was held in Mar del Plata from 13 to 17 November 2006, at the kind invitation of the Government of Argentina. The Coordinator and Chairperson of the Committee, Mr Fernando Nebbia, appointed Mrs Gabriela Catalani, Technical Coordinator of the Codex Contact Point, Secretary of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food, to act as Vice-chairperson of the Committee. The Session was attended by delegates from 21 member countries, and observers from 1 member country and 4 international or regional organizations. The list of participants is provided in Appendix I to this report.

OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. The Session was officially opened by Mr Fernando Nebbia, Under-Secretary for Farm Policy and Food at the Secretariat of Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Food of Argentina. Dr Maya Piñeiro, Senior Officer, Food Quality and Standards Service, Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, addressed the Committee on behalf of FAO. Dr Genaro Garcia, Regional Food Safety Advisor, Veterinary Public Health Unit of the Regional Office of the World Health Organization also addressed the Committee on behalf of PAHO/WHO (Pan American Health Organization/World Health Organization).

ADOPTION OF THE PROVISIONAL AGENDA (Agenda item 1)¹

3. The Coordinating Committee agreed to consider food additive *Stevia rebaudiana* at the end of Item 9 – Issues of Significance to the Region and to discuss the following matters under Agenda Item 11 “Other Business and Future Work”:

- Codex Standard for Table Grapes (for final adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission);
- Consensus in Codex;
- Addition of a new sardine-type of Ecuador in the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products;
- Standardization of “quinoa” (*Chenopodium quinoa Willd.*), “culantro” (*Eryngium foetidum*) and “tilapia” (*Oreochromis niloticus* and *Oreochromis aureus*);
- Harmonization of nutrition labelling in the Region;
- Use of clenbuterol as growing promoter in cattle;
- Judgement of equivalence of sanitary measures associated with food inspection and certification systems - Appendix.

4. The Committee adopted the Provisional Agenda as its Agenda for the Session with the above proposals.

5. In view of its heavy Agenda, the Committee agreed to set up working groups to work through a range of items of the Agenda in order to facilitate the consideration of the matters scheduled for discussion at its present meeting. The following working groups were established to this purpose:

- Matters arising from the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies – Request for comments on various matters for consideration by the Commission and the Committee on General Principles (Mexico);
- Implementation of the Recommendations of the Regional FAO/WHO Food Safety Conference for the Americas: Follow-up actions - project Platform to improve food safety and quality in the Region (Chile);
- CCLAC Electronic Fora - including the development of surveys on selected topics aimed at the civil society to measure the level of knowledge about the issues put forward (Argentina); and
- Maximum residue limits for pesticides – need for the establishment of Codex MRLs for pesticides and their compliance by WTO/Codex members (Brazil).

¹ CX/LAC 06/15/1.

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

6. The Coordinating Committee endorsed the following recommendations of the Working Group:

REVIEW OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEES

7. The Committee agreed with the recommendations of the Commission as set out in paragraphs 1 to 5 of meeting document CX/LAC 06/15/2.

TERMS OF REFERENCE OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATING COMMITTEES

8. The Committee reiterated the need to include the proposed phrase in the terms of reference of the CCLAC. The possibility of expressing needs as currently set out in the terms of reference differed from the intention of establishing common positions. The Committee suggested that each Coordinating Committee should take a decision as to whether this would be a useful role. It also considered that the notion that all or none of the Coordinating Committees should change their terms of reference lacked legal or logical foundation. The Committee endorsed this amendment to its terms of reference and recommended that the member countries should advocate such a position in the relevant fora.

RESPECTIVE ROLES OF THE REGIONAL COORDINATORS AND THE MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ELECTED ON A GEOGRAPHICAL BASIS

9. The Committee considered that this matter should be clarified in the Procedural Manual and should be further discussed by the Committee on General Principles to achieve maximum benefit for the Commission and its constituent Regions.

COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN 2008-2013

10. The Committee expressed specific considerations on the regional concern for pesticide residues and other more general considerations. However, because of the workload and time constraints, the Committee agreed that its comments were of a general nature and that it reserved the right to coordinate with its Members and emit further opinions on the restructuring of Codex and the Strategic Plan (e.g. at the forum of Codex Contact Points), which would be relayed to the Executive Committee and the Commission (see para. 82).

Goal 1 – Promoting sound regulatory frameworks**Item 1.6 – Exploring innovative risk management frameworks**

11. The Committee fully supported the exploration of innovative frameworks to address the issue of establishing MRLs.

12. In this regard, the Committee agreed that the level of representation of the Region in the establishment of maximum residue limits was worrying and that the developing countries, including those of the CCLAC, required greater consideration of their regional diets in the establishment of MRLs.

13. In the specific case of pesticide residues, the Committee stressed the urgent need to review the status of the Committee on Pesticide Residues (CCPR) from the perspective of its practical impact on developing countries. The time that it took the CCPR to establish MRLs was unacceptable, as a MRL had become obsolete by the time it had been approved by the Codex. In other words, a Codex MRL very often had no practical benefit at the time of its approval (see paras. 14 – 19 and 92 – 100).

Item 1.7 – Encouraging FAO/WHO to expand capacity building programmes

14. The Committee agreed that support was required for capacity building in this regard.

15. In this connection, the Committee expressed its concern that countries often lacked their own analytical studies and resorted to those of developed countries that did not always reflect prevailing circumstances in the Region.

² CX/LAC 06/15/2 and CX/LAC 06/15/2-Add.1; Report of the Working Group on Matters arising from the Commission and its subsidiary bodies (CRD 15).

Goal 2 – Promoting the widest and most consistent possible application of scientific principles and risk analysis

16. The Committee saw the need to include an additional item to strengthen the scientific advisory groups, to improve their efficiency and to equip them with the necessary resources. For example, resources should be prioritized for the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Pesticide Residues (JMPR) and other approaches sought where such resources were not available.

Goal 3 – Strengthening Codex work management capabilities

Item 3.4 – Analyse work management approaches that facilitate the advancement of texts in the Codex step process

17. The Committee suggested that this item be extended to the scientific advisory bodies as these were closely involved in the work of the Commission subsidiary bodies.

18. In the specific case of pesticide residues, the Committee expressed its concern that all attempts to streamline the work had not progressed in the CCPR. Also, Codex pesticide MRLs should only be removed when there was scientific justification for such action and not when there was insufficient data to revalidate the MRL, which also created problems for developing countries.

19. The Committee suggested that the following innovative approaches could help in the specific case of establishing pesticide MRLs (see paras 11-18 and 92-100):

- holding more JMPR meetings and deferring CCPR meetings to achieve consensus on more items each time the CCPR was convened;
- employing other means of discussion among JMPR experts, apart from physical meetings which required considerable resources, such as telecommunication media;
- recommending that governments request the authorization of applicants for pesticide registration to forward the data to the JMPR under terms of confidentiality or that companies clearly demonstrate that they have submitted the full documentation (“dossier”) which should be a requisite for renewal of registration.

Other considerations concerning the draft Commission Strategic Plan:

20. The Committee:

- considered, on principle, that the Strategic Plan should not include items that were under examination by the Commission or its subsidiary bodies, e.g. Items 1.5 (Antimicrobial resistance) and 2.6 (Guidelines for risk analysis for application by governments);
- expressed its strong endorsement of item 5.2 (Effective use of written comments) as this allowed consideration of the views of Members that lacked the resources to participate in meetings, despite having reached national consensus to express a position and contribute to the work of the Codex;
- considered, in relation to item 5.3 (Effectiveness of meetings of Commission subsidiary bodies in developing countries), that there should be a mechanism to ensure fair geographical distribution in the allocation of Codex subsidiary bodies when countries from regions with limited or no representation were willing to host such bodies (see paras 121 – 122).

REVIEW OF THE STRUCTURE AND MANDATES OF CODEX COMMITTEES AND TASK FORCES

21. **Proposal 1:** The Committee did not support placing an upper limit on the number of Codex meetings per biennium; if at all, as an indicator of the evolution of the work.

22. The Committee considered that the number of meetings of each Commission subsidiary body should depend on the number of issues to be discussed and the content of the agenda. Thus, consideration should be given to the possibility of postponing the sessions of subsidiary bodies whose agenda had few pending items.

23. **Proposal 2:** The Committee considered that the number of subsidiary bodies should be proportionate to the pending technical work approved by the Commission. The Committee did not therefore support an upper limit to the number of active subsidiary bodies that could co-exist at any one time to prevent an increase in Codex sessions, which in any case could be taken as a reference.

24. The Committee suggested that the scheduling of sessions could consider the possibility of holding concurrent meetings of Codex coordinating committees or commodity committees that were unrelated; for example Committees on Fish and Fish Products and on Milk and Milk Products. One member country expressed its concern about the overlapping of commodity committee meetings.

25. **Proposal 3:** The Committee considered that the frequency of meetings of Commission subsidiary bodies should depend on the respective agenda and urgency of work.

26. The Committee noted from experience that convening working groups physically immediately before a session could be useful for addressing issues that would take a lot of time in plenary and that were not very controversial. As regards controversial issues, it was difficult to reach compromises in working groups that would then be respected by all Members in plenary.

27. **Proposal 4:** The Committee noted that, depending on the agenda, there had been successful instances of changing the standard format of meetings (Committees on Milk and Milk Products, Processed Fruits and Vegetables, etc.), whereby these had been extended a little, for example to seven working/real days.

28. **Proposal 5:** The Committee supported this proposal.

29. **Proposal 6:** The Committee supported this proposal.

30. **Proposal 7:** The Committee saw no drawbacks in analyzing the structure and mandate of the Commission subsidiary bodies to take decisions on a case-by-case basis. For the time being, minor changes could be introduced which would help determine whether major changes were needed.

31. **Proposal 8:** The Committee noted the need to consider the international or regional trade of commodities for decision-making. Decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, with thorough examination of the need for an international standard and the workload of the worldwide committees. Such examination should be carried out by the CCEXEC under the Critical Review for a proposal to extend the scope of a standard to international level.

32. **Proposal 9:** The Committee supported this proposal.

33. **Proposal 10:** While the Committee acknowledged the importance of nutritional issues, decisions should be based on the Commission's criteria for establishing work priorities, in other words, the prioritization of food safety issues and commodity standards of interest to the developing countries.

34. The Committee noted that there were still outstanding basic food safety issues that needed to be prioritized given the lack of resources for risk assessments.

35. **Proposal 11:** The Committee supported this proposal (see paras 117 – 118).

ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION, INCLUDING CAPACITY BUILDING (Agenda Item 3)³

36. With regard to capacity building, the Coordinating Committee was informed that FAO and WHO were engaged in a programme of technical assistance activities and projects at national, regional and international levels, covering a wide range of areas related to food safety and quality. FAO and WHO also held a number of international events, workshops and expert consultations on food safety and quality. Furthermore, FAO and WHO continue to be engaged in the development of a number of manuals, guidelines and training materials to facilitate the capacity building efforts. Moreover, the Committee was informed about a number of specific capacity building activities carried out in the CCLAC region, referring to CX/LAC 06/15/3-Part A for further information.

37. The Committee was also informed:

- that the Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators 1 and 2 are currently being reviewed before a decision on holding a third forum will be taken.
- on the workshop on equivalence of sanitary measures and food control systems which took place immediately preceding the session. The contents will be distributed to the participants.
- that a new FAO manual on food inspection and auditing will soon be available, as well as the guides for risk analysis and three new biosecurity tools.

38. With regard to other matters arising from FAO and WHO, the Committee was informed on outcomes of recent FAO/WHO expert meetings, as well as progress of the FAO/WHO consultative process on provision of scientific advice to Codex and member countries referring to CX/LAC 06/15/3-Part B for further information.

³ CX/LAC 06/15/3-Parts A and B.

39. The Committee was further informed:

- that the report of the lactoperoxidase expert meeting was available on the FAO website.
- on the expert meeting that is currently being organized on *Escherichia coli* 0157:H7 in meat.
- that procedural Guidelines in relation to the provision of scientific advice are open for comments at the FAO and WHO websites.
- on the Belgrade report for new approaches to enhance participation of experts and the use of data from developing countries in scientific advice.

40. The Representative of PAHO/WHO:

- highlighted the progress of the laboratory networks *Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories* (INFAL), Pulsenet and WHO-G-Salm-Surv in the Region.
- informed about the database LEGALIM for facilitation of the updating and harmonization of food legislation which is used by 17 countries in the Region.
- informed about the initiative “Performance, Vision, and Strategies” (PVS) which is promoted by PAHO/WHO in cooperation with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) to food safety programmes.
- informed on a Masters programme in food safety management: 24 candidates participate in the first course of this programme developed by the PAHO/WHO in coordination with several universities of the Region as well as OIRSA.

41. The Representative of WHO stressed the importance of exposure assessment for the formulation of food safety policies.

42. Numerous delegations expressed their appreciation to the activities of FAO and WHO in the Region. Some delegations suggested coordinating the different activities among the ministries involved in food safety and informing the Codex Contact Points on these activities.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE FAO/WHO REGIONAL CONFERENCE ON FOOD SAFETY FOR THE AMERICAS AND THE CARIBBEAN – Follow-up Actions (Agenda Item 4)⁴

43. The FAO Representative presented the recommendations of the Conference that was held from 6 - 9 December 2005 in San Jose, Costa Rica, which were endorsed by the Coordinating Committee. She also informed on the various capacity building activities as follow-up to these recommendations.

44. The Committee recognized that some of the recommendations were being addressed under the different objectives of the Regional Strategic Plan and the Agenda of CCLAC e.g. use of Codex standards at national and regional levels. In addition, it was agreed to conduct pilot studies on risk analysis case studies for *Vibrio parahaemolyticus* (Chile), *Staphylococcus aureus* in cheese (Uruguay), *Escherichia coli* 0157:H7 in water and foods (Argentina) y *Salmonella* spp. in eggs (Jamaica). The Committee recognized the importance of having diet studies of the Region for the development of risk exposure assessment and the establishment of MRLs regionally representative.

45. The WHO Representative explained that work is conducted on food consumption and total diet studies based on regional diets from FAO Food Balance Sheets on national consumption which is useful information for planning food safety and nutrition policies. The Committee agreed to use the intergovernmental forum for developing a strategy on diet studies (both food safety and nutrition) for the Region with the support of FAO and PAHO/WHO.

⁴ CX/LAC 06/15/4 and CX/LAC 06/15/4-Add.1.

46. Also as a follow-up of the Conference recommendations, a project *Platform to improve Food Safety and Quality in the Region* was prepared and circulated prior to this meeting to all Members of the Region and discussed in an in-session Working Group. Based on the considerations of the Working Group, the Committee subsequently agreed to append the executive summary of the document to the report of this meeting (see Appendix II) and to post the project Platform on the CCLAC webpage⁵ while requesting Governments of the Region to present proposals for national, sub-regional or regional activities to donors and international agencies such as the *Standard and Trade Development Fund*⁶ (STDF) for potential funding. In this regard, it was suggested that regional country groupings of the international organizations such as GRULAC (Grupo Latinoamericano y del Caribe - *Latin American and Caribbean Group*) at FAO could present the proposal at the Regional Conference.

47. The Observer of IICA offered their assistance for the preparation of any additional project in the framework of the Platform.

INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS AND CONSUMER PARTICIPATION IN FOOD STANDARDS SETTING (Agenda item 5)⁷

48. The Coordinating Committee was informed of recent developments and current status on food legislation, food control, national Codex structures and consumer participation in countries of the Region. Additionally to the written comments submitted in response to CL 2006/33-LAC:Part A, the following information was presented to the session:

49. **Chile:** The country is in the process of establishing a food safety agency and setting a new Ministry of Agriculture and Food that will be responsible for the food chain approach.

50. **Cuba:** Food importers must take Codex standards as reference in their contractual relations. In 2005, the Ministries of Public Health and Foreign Commerce issued a Resolution by which food importers have the obligation to establish traceability in food import operations to facilitate the national competent authorities the identification of the food quality and safety issues.

51. **Dominican Republic:** The Consumer Protection Act 358/05 entered into force on 9 September 2005.

52. **Jamaica:** *National food control system:* A national food advisory body was established under the Food and Drug act to be followed-up by a Secretariat. Its major function is to design the legal framework for the establishment of a single food safety agency. Jamaica is in the final stage to implement the one stop shop for food imports and exports to facilitate food trade. MOUs have been developed to support coordination of inter-agency food safety activities. *National Codex Committee:* It is functioning with six priority working groups. *Consumer Participation in Standard Setting:* Consumer Affairs Commission plays an integral role in all standard committees. The Jamaica Standard Network (JSN) provides a forum for public input into the development of standards.

53. **Panama:** A Panama Food Safety Agency was created by law on 11 February 2006 which will coordinate all topics related to imported food products.

54. **Paraguay:** Two agencies were established under the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock concerning plant and animal health and quality respectively. A new Custom Code is in force. A national Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures was created.

55. **St. Lucia:** The agencies having jurisdiction for food include the Ministry of Health, Human Services and Gender Relations – the Environmental Health Division; the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries – Veterinary Department and Plant Protection Department and St. Lucia Bureau of Standards - food safety standards development and adoption (label assessment, hazard analysis and critical control point system (HACCP) training).

56. The National Codex Contact Point is housed at the St. Lucia Bureau of Standards. The Bureau has a functioning National Codex Committee made up of a broad cross-section of stakeholders. The National Consumers Association is represented in this Committee and in the Food Safety and Food Products Technical Committee.

⁵ CCLAC webpage: www.cclac.org.

⁶ <http://www.standardsfacility.org>.

⁷ CL 2006/33-LAC:Part A and comments submitted by Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada and Panama (CX/LAC 06/15/5); Brazil (CX/LAC 06/15/5-Add.1); Paraguay (CRD 1); Dominican Republic (CRD 4) and Peru (CRD 7)

57. **Consumers International:** The Observer of CI encouraged countries of the Region to search for alternatives of institutional support to strengthen economic and human resources of consumer organizations to allow their effective participation in the standard-setting process.

INFORMATION ON USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AT NATIONAL AND REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 6)⁸

58. The Coordinating Committee recalled the decision of the 57th Session of the Executive Committee to add a new agenda item to regional coordinating committees regarding the use of Codex standards and related texts at the national and regional level and, in the pursuit to this decision, the recommendation that members of coordinating committees submit information on the use of Codex standards⁹. The following is a summary of individual statements made additionally to what was provided in a written form, either in the formal working papers, or as conference room documents.

59. **Cuba:** The National Standardization Office keeps constant and systematic work on adoption and implementation of Codex Standards.

60. **Jamaica:** The country uses Codex standards as a basis for national standards. They are also used as a reference. On a regional level the Caribbean Regional Organization for Standards and Quality (CROSQ) is looking at a standard for packaged water and uses the relevant Codex Standard as a base.

61. **Paraguay:** The country has recently adopted *Guidelines for Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Food* (CAC GL 32-1999) food into their national legislation.

62. **St. Lucia:** The country has a new Food Safety Act of 2003. It is still in the draft stage. This new Act references standards adopted by the St. Lucia Bureau of Standards. This Agency has adopted some Codex standards as national ones. It is not always possible to adopt Codex standards as national standards since they have to adjust international standards to local conditions. However, Codex standards and related texts are used as a basis for the development of national standards.

63. The delegation of Chile suggested including in the CCLAC Strategic Plan the creation of an information system on import/export requirements concerning food quality/safety and other market requirements and to make this information available to all exporters. The Representative of FAO informed that the International Portal for Food Safety, Animal and Plant Health¹⁰ already offered the opportunity to search for many requirements in international markets.

64. The Codex Secretariat recalled that the item had been included in the agenda of coordinating committees following the abolishing of the Codex acceptance procedure not only to collect information about acceptances of Codex standards and related texts but also to identify their actual application and the difficulties experienced in doing this exercise as well as the non-use of Codex documentation both at national and regional levels and the reason, where applicable, among others points as indicated in Part B of CL 2006/33-LAC.

65. In addition, the Chairperson referred to the latest discussions on this matter at the Committee on General Principles explaining that while the Codex acceptance procedure took into account the dual mandate of Codex, WTO/SPS notifications were only required for food safety standards and only in the case that different standards were adopted. She suggested that Codex members could also inform the SPS Committee when partially or fully adopting Codex standards or related texts. She said that a number of countries while using Codex texts had not integrated them into their national legislation as mandatory and vice-versa. The situation also applied for WTO/TBT notifications in relation to non-food safety standards/related texts. She also suggested that a project on an information system about application/not-application of Codex texts and differences from national legislation could be included in the Platform and eventually be made available on the CCLAC website.

⁸ CL 2006/33-LAC:Part B and comments submitted by Bolivia, Costa Rica, Dominica, Grenada and Panama (CX/LAC 06/15/6); Brazil (CX/FFV 06/15/6-Add.1); Paraguay (CRD 1); Dominican Republic (CRD 4) and Peru (CRD 7).

⁹ ALINORM 06/29/3, para. 105.

¹⁰ www.ipfsaph.org

STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN (Agenda item 7)¹¹

66. In follow-up to the activities of the Strategic Plan, the CCLAC Coordination provided a report on progress towards the objectives and the tasks accomplished. The CCLAC Members expressed their unanimous appreciation of the work conducted by Argentina in implementing the Strategic Plan. They recognized that the objectives and actions of the Strategic Plan were medium and long-term goals and that their delivery and refinement were ongoing processes.

67. The delegation of Mexico drafted a questionnaire to generate quantitative indicators for selected items of the Strategic Plan 2002/7. This was circulated through CRD 10 which should be returned to the indicated e-mail addresses by **19 January 2007**. The questionnaire would be translated into English and both versions would be published on the CCLAC webpage as soon as possible.

OBJECTIVE 1: COMMUNICATION

68. The Coordinating Committee highlighted progress made in raising communication through the use of the two languages (Spanish and English) in all exchanges of information in the Region, including the CCLAC webpage. The Committee encouraged Members to check the details of Codex Contact Points and to report any change to the Codex Secretariat and the CCLAC Coordination.

69. The Members underscored the work conducted in developing the CCLAC webpage, the simplicity of its design and the usefulness of its contents. With regard to the use of information technology, the Members agreed on the need to post direct links to other pages of interest to the Region, including LEGALIM, INFOSAN, GEMS/FOOD and RILAA. The Committee agreed that Argentina should continue to host and update the CCLAC webpage.

70. In respect of the virtual chat room, the countries commended the Coordination for having achieved this objective and highlighted the need to keep a folder of CCLAC chat sessions. They also advised that such sessions should be announced sufficiently in advance. The Coordination asked participants to contact their Focal Points to find out how to access a chat session.

71. As regards the virtual fora, the CCLAC Members accepted the Coordination's proposal to have three levels of forum: the first for Codex Contact Points; the second for public authorities associated with Codex issues; and the third of open access. A Working Group was created to determine the start-up activities of each level, and its conclusions and proposals are given in Appendix III.

72. After examining the Working Group's initiatives, the Committee decided to convey other issues for decision through the webpage fora, namely:

- Following adoption of Mexico's motion, discussion on the definition of consensus was referred to level 1 of the forum (see para 128).
- In accordance with Chile's request for greater exchange of information on nutrition labelling in the Region, it was decided to consider this issue at level 2 of the forum through a country survey on main features of national provisions on nutrition labelling (see para 140).

OBJECTIVE 2: THE EFFECTIVE PARTICIPATION OF MEMBERS

73. The Committee stressed the need for the exchange of information to facilitate understanding of Codex issues and the drafting of national proposals for the Codex. The delegation of Mexico proposed that the effective participation of Members could be monitored by chart tracking the response of CCLAC Members to Codex circular letters. The Coordination urged Codex Contact Points to transmit position documents which had been tabled as conference room documents (CRDs) at Codex meetings, because presented late.

74. The CCLAC Members agreed that the attendance of delegates at Codex meetings had fallen in correlation with the decline in Trust Fund financing for the Region. They agreed to establish a chart to monitor CCLAC Member participation at Codex meetings.

75. The Committee agreed that the charts would be available on the CCLAC webpage at the first level of the forum. The Committee Members stressed that considerations on the parameters for classification and distribution of Trust Fund resources would be made under Agenda Item 9 (c) (see para 114).

¹¹ ALINORM 06/15/7 and comments submitted by IICA (CRD 3) and Mexico (CRD 10).

OBJECTIVE 3: CAPACITY BUILDING

76. With regard to capacity building, the CCLAC Members encouraged international organizations and donor governments to provide training to address needs in the Committee's prioritized areas. The Coordination and Brazil promoted the organization of a seminar on the process of establishing pesticide MRLs in the Codex and the problem of setting limits for secondary crops, which was held on the free day of the Committee meeting. Full information on this seminar was available on the CCLAC webpage.

77. With regard to distance training, the Coordination reported that with help from the Codex Secretariat, a distance training course had been developed to increase the effective participation of Members of the Region. The Coordination stated that the starting date of the English and Spanish versions of the course would soon be announced.

78. The Members reiterated the need for cross training between FAO/WHO and WTO and urged these organizations to develop joint intensive courses targeting the Codex Contact Points. The organization and promulgation of such courses should be channelled through the Codex Contact Points to ensure that National Committees were aware of existing vacancies. The Members acknowledged the ready availability of the IICA and encouraged effective take-up of its proposal to contribute to the realization, together with FAO/WHO and the WTO, of intensive training in topic areas of interest to the Region.

OBJECTIVE 4: USE OF TECHNICAL AND SCIENTIFIC CAPACITIES

79. The Coordination recalled the pending establishment of a list of experts of CCLAC Members in different Codex fields.

80. The Committee recognized that there had been an increase in demand for experts from within the Region to deliver projects targeting the specific needs of CCLAC Members. It agreed that this matter would be addressed through the intergovernmental forum as set out in Appendix III. It suggested that consideration should be given to the FAO/WHO recommendations on the selection of scientific advisory experts when identifying national experts. However, it indicated that such criteria would not be appropriate when experience and expertise in other areas covered by Codex were required and for which broader criteria would need to be taken into account.

OBJECTIVE 5: CONTINUITY OF TASKS

81. The Committee unanimously recognized the excellent work of Argentina in implementing the Regional Strategic Plan. The Coordination assured the Committee that it would continue its ongoing work under the Strategic Plan until the Commission had endorsed the appointment of the new Coordinator, but would initiate a timely process of orderly transfer.

82. The Committee agreed that it should align its objectives with those of the Commission Strategic Plan 2008-2013, for which specific recommendations were made under Agenda Item 2. The Members however reserved the right to make new proposals or comments regarding the restructuring of Codex and its activities (see para 10).

OBJECTIVE 6: TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL COOPERATION

83. Drawing upon the shared experiences of CCLAC Members in using the technical and scientific capabilities of the Region, the Committee encouraged its Members to cooperate bilaterally or subregionally in the use of regional capabilities to meet Members' needs. It also urged, in this connection, that consideration be given to funds from regional organizations or other donors and sources of financing for the formulation of joint programmes or initiatives.

84. The Committee unanimously approved a draft **Platform to Increase Food Safety and Quality in Latin America and the Caribbean** aimed at securing training and financial resources to create capacity and implement sanitary measures as detailed in Agenda Item 4 relating to follow-up actions to the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for the Americas and the Caribbean.

OBJECTIVE 7: IDENTIFICATION AND PRIORITIZATION OF REGIONAL NEEDS IN STANDARD SETTING

85. The Committee noted that integration and communication among Members had fostered country-level analysis of the need to establish regional or international standards. This was evident from the Committee's conclusions on priority issues at its 14th Session and from the proposals for new work under Agenda Item 11 "Other Business and Future Work".

GUIDELINES FOR FOOD SAFETY IN TOURIST ZONES (Agenda item 8)¹²

86. The Coordinating Committee recalled that this matter had been on its Agenda for a number of sessions. At its last session, it was decided to assess the merit of proceeding with the development of the Guidelines through a Circular Letter (CL 2005/19-LAC) containing a number of questions in this regard. The Chairperson introduced the working document, containing the replies to the Circular Letter and a redrafted text prepared on the basis of the comments received.

87. Some member countries reiterated the need for Codex guidance on this matter, especially in connection with the preparation of athletics or cultural events while others felt that application of such Guidelines could be complicated in countries where tourist zones and other areas largely overlapped. They also felt that having different food regulations for tourists might be seen as discrimination for local population. They indicated that added value to tourist zones can be sought through voluntary means other than regulatory frameworks such as private certification due to the application of quality assurance systems which some hotel chains and tourist companies already provided for.

88. Several delegations recognized that there was a valid concern on how to deal with food safety in tourist zones and that problems were mainly related to enforcement of existing food regulations in particular for small and medium sized business (SMEs) with seasonal staff worked in tourist areas that had difficulties to ensure adequate food safety and quality due to lack of or not enough training.

89. The Committee acknowledged that great progress had been made on identifying the issues associated with food safety in tourist zones and that a great amount of flexibility had been shown on how to deal with them in the previous discussions and the current Guidelines. The Committee agreed that the available Codex as well as FAO and WHO documents did not make necessary the development of such Guidelines and that greater efforts should be put in enforcement of food regulations and capacity building activities in this regard.

CONCLUSION

90. The Committee agreed to discontinue work on Guidelines for Food Safety in Tourist Zones. It also agreed to call on Codex member governments of the Region to implement relevant Codex standards and related texts such as the *Code of Hygienic Practice for the Preparation and Sale of Street Vended Foods – Regional Code for Latin America and the Caribbean* (CAC/RCP 43-1995) as well as FAO and WHO documents e.g. WHO - 5 keys for Food Safety, FAO - Implementation of HACCP for Small and Medium Sized Enterprises, etc.

91. The Committee also agreed that FAO and WHO should provide training for trainers on good hygienic/manufacturing practices (GHPs/GMPs) and HACCP system to train agri-food SMEs in tourism areas and that this matter could be also developed through the project Platform to improve food safety and quality in Latin America and the Caribbean and in the intergovernmental forum.

ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE TO THE REGION

NON-COMPLIANCE WITH CODEX MRLs AND IDENTIFICATION OF COMPOUNDS FOR WHICH CODEX MRLs ARE NEEDED (Agenda Item 9a)¹³

Electronic working group on MRLs/Pesticides

92. The delegation of Brazil, as leading country of the Working Group on MRLs/Pesticides, introduced the item summing up the discussion at the last session of the Coordinating Committee on this matter¹⁴. The Delegation explained that the Working Group sought to identify:

- (a) non-compliance with Codex MRLs/Pesticides and
- (b) compounds for which Codex MRLs/Pesticides were needed and thus generate data for their evaluation by the Joint FAO/WHO Meeting on Pesticide Residues (JMPR).

The Delegation indicated that concerns were raised on stricter importing country MRL requirements than corresponding Codex MRLs or the setting of maximum residue limits at the detection limit of the analytical method without scientific basis for such a decision among others issues.

¹² CX/LAC 06/15/8.

¹³ CX/LAC 06/15/9 and comments submitted by Argentina, Costa Rica, Panama and Uruguay (CX/LAC 06/15/9-Add.1); Costa Rica (CRD 2) and Brazil (CRD 5).

¹⁴ ALINORM 05/28/36, paras. 90 - 93.

93. In order to comply with its objectives, the Working Group selected some cultures of interest to the Region which were internationally traded, the compounds commonly used in these cultures by a number of Codex member countries and the MRLs applied vis-à-vis compliance with corresponding Codex MRLs when existed.

94. Some of the conclusions were that, in the case of apples, there were 26 Codex MRLs for this product while the average in the countries researched was 35; that about 67% of Codex member MRLs existed for compounds which did not have their corresponding Codex MRLs, and accordingly, an average of 33% of Codex member MRLs were established for compounds which also had their corresponding Codex MRLs while 30% of those Codex member MRLs were more restrictive than the corresponding Codex MRLs.

95. The Working Group made a number of conclusions based on these findings such as: there were a variety of issues that affected country imports and exports e.g. compliance with stricter importing country MRLs than those established by Codex; lack of Codex MRLs to address the needs of developing countries particularly those of the Latin American and the Caribbean Region, etc. In this regard, special attention should be given by CCLAC members to a discussion paper on how Codex MRLs are used at national level that would be considered at the next session of the Committee on Pesticide Residues.

In-session Working Group on MRLs/Pesticides

96. In addition, the delegation of Brazil referred to the discussion hold in an in-session Working Group which based its discussion on the above considerations.

97. The Coordinating Committee noted the following conclusions and recommendations:

- The impact caused by the lack of establishment of maximum residue limits by Codex on:
 - ***The health of the consumers***, considering that the great majority of countries of the Region has not even implemented the internal procedures necessary to establish national MRLs, using those of the Codex. Therefore it is necessary that, for the combinations agrochemical/culture frequently used in the Region, the corresponding MRLs be set in order to protect public health from the effects of residues of pesticides in foods.
 - ***The international food trade***, because it is necessary that the WTO member countries recognize the maximum residue limits and maximum levels established by the Codex as international reference standards.
- The long period of time presently required to establish a Codex MRLs.
- The present procedures used by the CCPR to eliminate, without scientific evidence, the MRLs previously established that are of importance to the Region.
- The lack of resources that the Region faces to generate its own data to enable JMPR to perform the risk assessment so that CCPR can establish new MRLs.
- The fact that the proposal made by the Chair of CCPR at its 38th Session to the elaborate a discussion paper on how Codex MRLs are used at the national level (ALINORM 06/29/24, paragraphs 222-230) has not yet been implemented.

98. The Committee expressed its concern on the situation for the establishment of Codex MRLs/Pesticides vis-à-vis the work of JMPR/CCPR and its consequences for countries exports of the Region (see paras. 11 - 19).

99. Considering the need to clarify the Commission, CCPR and JMPR the serious situation in relation to the above-mentioned problems, the Committee agreed to reconvene the Working Group on MRLs/Pesticides under the chairmanship of Brazil to continue to collect data on the combination agrochemical/culture for which there are no Codex MRLs, including national MRLs, and to complete this information by **31 January 2007** in order to make it available in time for the next session of the CCPR.

100. Once the data have been received, Brazil, as leading country of the Working Group, would prepare a revised version of document CX/LAC 06/15/9 in consultation with the members of the Working Group for submission to the next session of the Committee on Pesticide Residues. It was agreed that submission of information should follow the format as indicated in Table 1 of CX/LAC 06/15/9. It was also agreed that this work would be carried out through electronic means of communication such as e-mail and the CCLAC webpage (e.g. forum for Codex contact points).

DISCUSSION PAPER ON STEVIOSIDE (Agenda Item 9b)¹⁵

101. The delegation of Brazil introduced the document containing a summary report on the status of work on *Stevia rebaudiana* in the Committee on Food Additives (CCFA) and the Joint FAO/WHO Committee on Food Additives (JECFA). The Delegation informed that steviol glycosides was evaluated by the 63rd JECFA Meeting¹⁶ (June 2004) which assigned it a temporary Acceptable Daily Intake (ADI) pending additional information by 2007 on the pharmacological effects of steviol glycosides in humans. The Delegation noted that recent information confirmed that the JECFA evaluation of this compound was scheduled for 2008.

102. The delegation of Paraguay informed about the recently concluded 2nd International Stevia Symposium held on 9-10 November 2006, in Asuncion, Paraguay, which announced the results of the studies required by JECFA that would allow the assignment of a full IDA to steviol glycosides as indicated in CRD 14. The Delegation questioned the rescheduling for the assessment of the steviol glycosides by the 2008 JECFA meeting as opposed to 2007 as stated in the report of the 63rd JECFA meeting. In addition, the Delegation indicated that request for submission of data for the 2007 JECFA meeting was set up at 1 December 2006 and that countries involved in the submission of additional information solicited by JECFA had confirmed the JECFA Secretariat that such information would be made available to the JECFA Secretariat in time for the 2007 JECFA meeting.

103. The Representative of FAO conveyed the information from the JECFA Secretariat on steviol glycosides to the Committee regarding the scheduling of the evaluation for 2008 available as CRD 18. She explained that scheduling of the evaluation can only be done when the JECFA Secretariat is reasonably sure that all activities on the data being generated by the different sponsors have been concluded and that they will be submitted in the requested date. Although the JECFA Secretariat received communications from Argentina, Brazil and Paraguay that the data would become available no information on what type of data and the timeframe for submission of the information were transmitted to the JECFA Secretariat. In addition, the JECFA Secretariat was informed by a sponsor that a comprehensive package with a safety programme involving toxicological and metabolic studies in laboratory animals and clinical human trials would be concluded in the fall of 2007. Based on the information available and the procedures to be followed, the evaluation date was scheduled for the 2008 JECFA meeting. The JECFA Secretariat would very much appreciate to receive a detail list of the studies generated by Argentina, Brazil, Japan, Paraguay and the industry sponsor in Latin America.

104. Several delegations expressed concern on the rescheduling of the evaluation of *Stevia rebaudiana* as it was a natural food additive sweetener and, as such, was in line with the *WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health*. It was also noted that there was not many instances in which developing countries proposed substances for safety evaluation and joint efforts to carry out scientific studies for JECFA to perform risk assessment that would be of benefit to other countries within and outside the Region which are currently growing or commercializing stevia. In this regard, prioritization for scientific advice should be given for request from developing countries for compounds that are of highly interest in terms of nutrition, safety and fair trade practices. It was further noted that the request from the JECFA Secretariat as per the nature of the data and the timeframe for their submission were already defined by the 63rd JECFA meeting and the deadline set up at 1 December 2006 in the call for data respectively. Therefore, no further clarification should be provided in this regard. Moreover, requests and information presented through governments should be given priority over a single sponsor.

105. The Coordinating Committee expressed its disagreement on the rescheduling of the evaluation of steviol glycosides and unanimously supported the reinsertion of this compound in the list of substances scheduled for evaluation in 2007 as the interested countries had confirmed the submission of the data requested by JECFA in conformity with the deadline for its assessment in the 2007 JECFA meeting.

OTHER ISSUES OF SIGNIFICANCE TO THE REGION (Agenda Item 9c)¹⁷**RISK ANALYSIS PRINCIPLES FOR APPLICATION BY GOVERNMENTS**

106. The delegation of Argentina presented information on the outcome of a meeting of a Working Group created at the last session of the Committee on General Principles (see CRD 8) to consider the above-mentioned document.

¹⁵ CX/LAC 06/15/10 and comments submitted by Paraguay (CRD 14); Additional information from the JECFA Secretariat to CCLAC on steviol glycosides (CRD 18).

¹⁶ JECFA/63/SC, point 1 and Annex 2.

¹⁷ CX/LAC 06/15/11 and comments submitted by Argentina (CRDs 8 and 9).

107. The delegation of Argentina explained that only a few delegations from the Region were represented at that meeting and thus the Delegation felt that it would be important to state a clear CCLAC position on this issue. The Coordinating Committee was informed that the Working Group had used as a basis for a new document the existing *Working Principles for Risk Analysis in the Framework of the Codex Alimentarius*, deleting those paragraphs not appropriate for inclusion in a document aimed at governments. The Delegation further informed that the draft text included a paragraph on “precaution” but it did not include principles that would limit its application by governments where there was not sufficient scientific evidence supporting the measure nor provide for a reasonable period of time for completion of risk analysis in order to adopt a final measure proportional to the assessed risk. The Delegation further said that the draft text rather than referring to “sanitary measures” used the term “decisions” which could lead to confusion as the latter was not defined neither in the WTO/SPS Agreement nor in the relevant Codex texts.

108. Many delegations reiterated the positions stated at previous sessions but agreed to try to arrive at a common regional position. The delegation of Chile supported work on the Risk Analysis Principles for application by governments because they felt that the document would be an important guidance to governments in this area rather than not having guidance which meant that decisions could be taken arbitrarily. They felt that, if the Principles were to be developed, they needed to include the concept of “precaution” in such a way to restrict its use in order not to become a technical barrier to trade.

109. Other delegations stated that they were not in favour of a Codex document on this matter because the existing guidance contained in Codex texts and in the WTO/SPS Agreement were sufficient. They especially did not feel it appropriate to include an unlimited concept of “precaution” in a Codex text which would diminish the principle that Codex based its decisions on science. These delegations also stated that the matter was thoroughly discussed at the Commission and other pertinent subsidiary bodies and not consensus was found for the development of such a document containing the “precautionary measure/principle”.

110. The Committee could not come to a consensus as to whether a Codex document on risk analysis for governments should be developed. The CCLAC agreed that, if such a document was moved forward in the Step Procedure and if the concept of “precaution” was to be included, this should be phrased in such a way as to make clear that “precaution” was a qualified exception to be applied in a limited way, under strict criteria and timeframes and should not go beyond what was contained in the WTO/SPS Agreement. In addition, the terminology used e.g. “measures” as opposed to “decisions” must be aligned with those of the WTO/SPS Agreement and relevant Codex texts.

111. The CCLAC also committed itself to continue discussing this matter in the forum for the Codex Contact Points with the goal of finding a common position.

CODE OF ETHICS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE IN FOODS

112. The Committee took note of the discussions held in the 15th Session of the Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (CCFICS) following a request from the Committee on General Principles as summarized by Argentina in CRD 9.

113. The Committee reiterated its position on this matter as adopted¹⁸ at its last session. Besides, the Committee agreed that no further work was needed on the Code of Ethics as the Principles contained therein were already addressed in the relevant WTO Agreements and Codex texts, therefore, the only measure that should be taken was prioritization of capacity building for establishing/implementing food export/import control systems in those Codex members where such systems were not sufficient. The Committee thus supported the Recommendation 2¹⁹ relating to the use of CCFICS texts and technical assistance to strengthen national food import and export control systems.

FAO/WHO TRUST FUND

114. The CCLAC agreed to clarify its position regarding the status and functioning of the Trust Fund as follows:

- The CCLAC recognized the potential advantages of the Trust Fund and undertook to make recommendations for its improvement and effectiveness. However, the Committee considered that the parameters for the distribution of funds did not fully benefit the Region, to the extent that 33 Codex Members had less scope for support.
- The CCLAC intended to continue collaborating with the administrators of the Trust Fund and donor countries to obtain financial support for its Members.

¹⁸ ALINORM 05/28/36, para. 19.

¹⁹ ALINORM 07/30/30, para. 63.

- The CCLAC was one of the regions best placed to demonstrate that, although developing countries, its Members had absorbed the changes of globalization, had made efforts to train their Codex-related public and private structures and were therefore well prepared to participate in the Codex decision-making process. However, the absence of funds to participate in corresponding meetings meant having little or no influence on Codex decisions.
- The CCLAC asked the Regional Coordinator, the Regional Representative and all the Members of the CCLAC to help achieve the following objectives:
 - to give priority to the allocation of funds for the attendance of meetings, given that other funds existed for capacity building at FAO and WHO level and also from other sources;
 - to re-engage discussion to consider other Trust Fund selection criteria for financing participation at meetings;

For example, countries requesting assistance to participate in a meeting would have to justify their interest in the topics under discussion at the Commission and/or its subsidiary bodies (whether food safety issues or basic quality problems existed at national level in relation to the issues to be addressed or whether these issues cause trade problems in domestic or foreign markets);

Applicant countries should also declare whether they had a uniform national position to present at the meeting on at least some of the topics to be discussed at the Commission and/or its subsidiary bodies;
 - to urge the Trust Fund authorities to continue work on facilitating the administrative procedures for delegates and for these to receive information, tickets and per diems for meetings in good time;
 - that, for reasons of transparency, the Trust Fund authorities present detailed information on which countries had applied for funding to participate in each Codex meeting and whether the funding had been granted or not;
 - that workshops continue to be held before Codex committee sessions and that their attendance be mandatory for delegates receiving Trust Fund financing and attending Codex meetings for the first time to ensure they had basic understanding and preparation.

OVERLAPPING OF TOPICS OF CODEX AND ISO

115. The Committee noted that recent decisions on new work of ISO on fish and fisheries had raised concerns among members of the Region about a possible duplication of work between ISO and Codex.

116. The Committee also noted that this issue had been discussed at the last session of the Commission²⁰ where it had been stressed that ISO and Codex work should be complementary, that the Commission supported continued cooperation and coordination with ISO and that the Codex Secretariat should maintain its contacts with ISO and continue to report regularly to the Commission on ISO activities of relevance to Codex work. Several delegations indicated that Codex should keep its leadership as reference point for the standardization of food quality and safety issues.

117. The Committee stressed that while both Codex and ISO standards were of voluntary nature, Codex standards dealt with food safety issues in the framework of WTO/SPS Agreement. In this regard, Codex was an intergovernmental organization while ISO was mainly a private body. The Committee agreed that relations with ISO should be synergetic and cooperative and that collaboration, coordination and communication should be enhanced further in order to find areas where Codex and ISO can complement each other to avoid any duplication of work (see para. 35).

118. The Committee further noted the issue of private standards other than ISO e.g. EUREPGAP. The Committee expressed concern about the issue that even if Codex standards were complied with, they were in certain cases not enough for market access because compliance with private standards were preferable and stricter. The Committee felt that this could cause barriers to trade and confusion to consumers. The Committee agreed that the issue of the role of private standards versus Codex standards was an important concern and should be discussed in Codex (see para. 35).

²⁰ ALINORM 06/29/41, paras. 210 to 213

ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE

119. The Committee noted that a Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance was established at the last session of the Commission to address issues related to risk assessment/management for antimicrobials use in human and veterinary medicine. Some delegations informed the Committee on the ongoing work undertaken by these countries in this field. Several delegations were of the opinion that compounds used in products of interest to the Region should be identified and data should be generated in order to provide the Joint FAO/WHO Meetings on Microbiological Risk Assessment (JEMRA) with information to perform risk assessment that could be representative of all Codex regions.

120. The Committee agreed to continue to discuss this issue through the forum for the Codex Contact Points, including proposals for new work to be undertaken by the Task Force as indicated in CL 2006/38-AMR as well as regional positions when possible. To this purpose, it was agreed to set up an electronic Working Group made up of Brazil (chair), Argentina, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominica, Guatemala, Jamaica, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay and ALA (see Appendix III).

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF SUBSIDIARY BODIES OF THE COMMISSION

121. The Committee noted that only Mexico hosted a Committee on Fresh Fruits and Vegetables in the Region. The Committee also noted that the current distribution of subsidiary bodies of the Commission did not allow for a balanced participation of all regions in the work of Codex committees and task forces. The Committee agreed to recommend governments and the Commission to take into account the concentration of Codex subsidiary bodies in certain regions.

122. The Committee agreed to draw the attention of Codex members on the need for a representative geographic distribution of Codex subsidiary bodies so that when they were available for hosting priority should be given to countries volunteering from those regions where there was no or a few Codex committees/task forces allocated to ensure fair distribution and equal participation of Codex members. This Committee also agreed that this issue should be addressed in the Commission Strategic Plan (see para. 20).

123. The Committee agreed to support Argentina as host country for the Codex Committee on Fats and Oils if the next Session of the Commission decided to appoint a new host country for this Committee.

NOMINATION OF COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 10)²¹

124. The delegation of Costa Rica proposed the nomination of Mexico as the Coordinator for Latin America and the Caribbean by the 30th Session of the Commission. The delegation of Brazil proposed that Argentina be selected as Regional Representative for Latin America and the Caribbean at the 30th Session of the Commission. Both proposals were unanimously endorsed by the Coordinating Committee.

125. The Committee complimented Argentina on the organization of the present session and on its excellent work in furthering the involvement of CCLAC members in Codex matters of significance to the Region and in representing the interests of the Region in Codex and other related fora.

126. Mrs Gabriela Catalani thanked the Committee on behalf of Argentina and expressed her intention to work with the members of the Region to strengthen their participation in Codex work at regional and international level. The delegation of Mexico expressed its appreciation for the nomination and reasserted the Committee its compromise in conveying the needs and position of the Region to the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies.

OTHER BUSINESS AND FUTURE WORK (Agenda Item 11)²²**STANDARD FOR TABLE GRAPES (for final adoption by the Codex Alimentarius Commission)**

127. The Committee supported the final adoption of the draft Standard for Table Grapes at the next session of the Commission.

²¹ CX/LAC 06/15/12.

²² Comments submitted by Argentina (CRD 6); Bolivia (CRD 11); Ecuador (CRD 12); Guatemala (CRD 13) and Costa Rica (CRDs 16 & 17).

CONSENSUS IN CODEX

128. The Committee agreed on the importance of decisions taken by consensus in Codex. It encouraged members of the Region to consider the need for a definition of consensus, its advantages and disadvantages, impact on Codex work, etc. It was noted that this matter could be discussed in the forum for the Codex Contact Points with a view to reaching a regional position, if possible, in view of the consideration of this matter at the Committee on General Principles next year (see para. 72).

NEW SARDINE-TYPE OF ECUADOR

129. The delegation of Ecuador informed the Committee on the need to include a new sardine-type of Ecuador “pinchagua” (*Opisthonema spp*) in the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products (CODEX STAN 94-1981, Rev. 1-1995) and requested the support of the Committee for this addition in accordance with the procedure for inclusion of additional species in standards for fish and fishery products as established by the Committee on Fish and Fishery Products (CCFFP).

130. The delegation of Chile offered its assistance based on the experience with the Chilean sardine-type. The delegation of Brazil informed the Committee on the activities of an intergovernmental Technical Committee on Safety and Hygiene of Fishery Products made up of Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay which could also assist Ecuador in this matter and whose work on equivalence had been recognized in the SPS/WTO Committee.

131. The Committee agreed to support Ecuador for the success of the inclusion process as in the case of Chile with the addition of the Chilean sardine-type *Clupea bentincki*²³ that was included in the Standard for Sardines at the last session of the CCFFP. To this aim, it agreed to set up an electronic Working Group made up of Ecuador (chair), Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Peru.

STANDARDIZATION OF “QUINOA” (*Chenopodium quinoa Willd.*)

132. The delegation of Bolivia informed the Committee that this product has a growing international market and was an important commodity for market access in the Andean region. The Committee supported work on standardization of “quinoa”. To this purpose, it agreed to set up an electronic Working Group led by Bolivia with the assistance of Cuba, Ecuador, Mexico and Peru to study available Codex documentation with a view to determining the appropriateness to develop a Standard for this product for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

STANDARDIZATION OF “CULANTRO” (*Eryngium foetidum*)

133. The delegation of Costa Rica noted that major trade problems associated with this product related to phytosanitary and safety issues. The Committee noted that the botanical classification of the product was needed in order to determine the appropriateness of its standardization within Codex. In this regard, it agreed to set up an electronic Working Group led by Costa Rica with the assistance of Guatemala, Bolivia, Mexico and Nicaragua to review relevant Codex documentation in order to determine the opportunity to develop a Standard for this product for consideration by the next session of the Committee.

STANDARDIZATION OF “TILAPIA” (*Oreochromis niloticus* and *Oreochromis aureus*)

134. The delegation of Costa Rica informed the Committee about the importance of trade in tilapia produced in aquaculture. They said that while there were a number of standards for fish in Codex, none addressed the specificities of tilapia produced in aquaculture. They proposed to discuss the possibility of developing a separate standard for this product. The Codex Secretariat informed the Committee that the CCFFP had developed a section on aquaculture in the *Codex Code of Practice for Fish and Fishery Products* (CAC/RCP 52-2003, Section 6) and recommended to take it into account when considering this matter.

135. The Committee agreed that the delegation of Costa Rica would prepare a discussion document to be distributed to CCLAC members developing alternatives on how to deal with this matter taking into account existing guidance in Codex for consideration at its next session.

RESTRICTION ON THE USE OF CLEMBUTEROL

136. The delegation of Guatemala voiced their concern about the problems caused by the misuse of clenbuterol as a growth promoter in cattle which had led to severe food poisoning in some countries that sometimes ended up with consumers death. The Committee stressed the need to avoid the misuse of clenbuterol and to enforce existing Codex MRLs for veterinary drugs and other relevant Codex texts such as the *Code of Practice for Control of the Use of Veterinary Drugs* (CAC/RCP 38-1993).

²³ ALINORM 07/30/18, paras. 12- 18.

NUTRITION LABELLING

137. The delegation of Chile brought to the attention of the Committee the growing problem of excessive food intake in the Region leading to proliferation of obesity and non-communicable diseases such as heart disease, diabetes and certain cancers and asked to include in the agenda of the CCLAC Strategic Plan the harmonization of standards on nutritional labelling with the existing Codex standard. They also said that different labelling provisions in the Region could lead to problems in trade and suggested to have harmonized labelling as a strategy. The delegations of Costa Rica and Ecuador supported this proposal.

138. The delegation of Brazil informed the Committee that nutritional labelling had been harmonized within MERCOSUR to be compulsory. The delegation of Paraguay said that nutritional labelling was compulsory in their legislation. The delegation of Jamaica said that at present nutritional labelling was optional in their country but that manufacturers used it as a marketing tool.

139. The delegation of Mexico said that there were ongoing discussions in their country on whether nutritional labelling should be compulsory for all foods, that they would provide input to CL 2006/44-CAC on a Request for Comments on a draft Action Plan for the Implementation of the WHO Global Strategy on Diet, Physical Activity and Health. They also said they believed it would be very complex to take a position in this meeting.

140. The Committee agreed to conduct a survey on the use of nutritional labelling in different countries of the Region and to discuss in the intergovernmental forum how to set goals for eventual harmonization (see para. 72).

EQUIVALENCE OF SANITARY MEASURES ASSOCIATED WITH FOOD INSPECTION AND CERTIFICATION SYSTEMS

141. The delegation of Argentina informed the Committee in CRD 6 on the discussions held at the 15th CCFICS on the proposed draft Appendix to the *Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems* (CAC/GL 53-2003). The Delegation felt that it would be useful if the Committee would take a strong position on a number of issues concerning the development of this document:

- The Appendix should be consistent with the obligations of the SPS/WTO Agreement namely: if an importing country is a WTO member, it has the legal obligation to enter into consultations with an exporting country (that is also a WTO member) that has submitted a request for equivalence and that all WTO members also have the obligation to recognize equivalence if it can be demonstrated.
- The Appendix should provide useful information for members when preparing requests for equivalence but not distort the principles that have already been established in the Guidelines.
- The Guidelines provide the possibility to request the judgement of equivalence of a sanitary measure or measures as well as systems for a product or group of products. This should be the same in the Appendix.
- Harmonization of systems and compliance with measures are not equivalence and should thus not be treated in the Appendix.
- The Appendix should not make any mention to different country experience levels at the moment in which a request for equivalence is made in order to avoid any kind of discrimination between countries.

142. The Committee agreed the points mentioned above as its common position.

DATE AND PLACE OF THE NEXT SESSION

143. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its next session would be held in Mexico in approximately two years time. The exact date and venue would be decided by the Secretariats of Mexico and Codex, subject to the approval of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

ANNEX
SUMMARY STATUS OF WORK

SUBJECT MATTER	STEP	ACTION BY:	DOCUMENT REFERENCE (ALINORM 07/30/36)
Updating of the Regional Strategic Plan for CCLAC	-----	Regional Coordinator	paras. 66 and 81
Codex MRLs for pesticides	-----	Electronic working group led by Brazil Codex contact points forum	paras. 99 - 100
Antimicrobial resistance	-----	Electronic working group led by Brazil Codex contact points forum	para. 120
Inclusion of a new sardine-type of Ecuador in the Standard for Canned Sardines and Sardine-Type Products	-----	Electronic working group led by Ecuador	para. 131
Discussion paper on the standardization of "quinoa"	-----	Electronic working group led by Bolivia	para. 132
Discussion paper on the standardization of "culantro"	-----	Costa Rica	para. 133
Discussion paper on the standardization of "tilapia"	-----	Electronic working group led by Costa Rica	para. 134
Issues of significance to the Region to be discussed in the CCLAC fora:			
Strategic Planning 2008-2013 of the Commission and revision of the structure and mandates of Codex committees and task forces	-----	Codex contact points forum	para. 10
Survey on follow-up to the effective participation of Members of the Region in the work and sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies	-----	Codex contact points forum	para. 72
Definition of consensus in Codex	-----	Codex contact points forum	para. 72
Risk analysis principles for application by governments	-----	Codex contact points forum	para. 111
Development of a strategy on diet studies (both food safety and nutrition) for the Region	-----	Intergovernmental forum and FAO/WHO	para. 45
Identification of regional experts in the field of scientific advice and capacity building to attend needs of Members of the Region	-----	Intergovernmental forum	para. 80
Identification of practical problems in regard to food safety in tourist zones	-----	Intergovernmental forum	para. 91
Survey on the situation of nutrition labelling within countries of the Region with a view to its potential regional harmonization	-----	Intergovernmental forum	para. 140
Survey(s) aimed at the civil society to measure the level of knowledge on matters described therein	-----	Forum for the civil society	para. 5

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PLATFORM FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN**"Increasing Food Safety and Quality"****EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

FAO and WHO affirm that assuring food safety is essential for the protection of public health and for the enhancement of quality of life in all countries. In this connection, the *FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for the Americas and the Caribbean*, held in Costa Rica in December 2005, set out by underscoring the importance of food safety in integrated cross-sectoral policies to strengthen food security and safety programmes, to guarantee quality food and to facilitate international trade, with the added emphasis that achievement of these aims would further advancement towards the Millennium Goals.

Many delegates attending the Conference recognized that while considerable progress had been made in developing systems of control and in establishing appropriate measures to guarantee the safety of foods consumed nationally – whether produced domestically or imported – and foods earmarked for export, there were still inadequacies in ensuring the supply of safe and wholesome foods in the countries of the CCLAC and this was hampering the sustained, balanced realization of the Region's development potentials.

In the light of such conclusions, the participants proposed a series of practical measures to strengthen national food control systems and, while recognizing the merit of the Conference, noted that its true success would be gauged by the scale of implementation of recommended measures and future improvement in the safety of foods produced and consumed in the Region.

For these reasons, recognizing the importance of pursuing practical actions to build capacity to overcome such challenges and promote food safety, following the guidelines of the FAO and WHO governing bodies, adopting the recommendations of the First and Second FAO/WHO Global Forum of Food Safety Regulators and those from the FAO/WHO Regional Conference on Food Safety for the Americas and the Caribbean and taking into account the principles of the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures of the WTO and the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC), this Platform has been developed with the *central objective* of strengthening the inherent capacities of each national stakeholder active throughout the food chain in each country of Latin America and the Caribbean, in order to enhance the safety of food consumed in and exported from the Region.

There have been significant changes in recent years in the way food is produced, processed, distributed and marketed at global level, with notable progress also in the development of food inspection and control systems which, if applied properly, ensure the supply of safer and higher quality food.

Recognizing the need to strengthen food safety in the light of the potential growth of exports to the more demanding countries and the need to prevent significant commercial and economic losses, while at the same time addressing the priority health issues promoted in the Millennium Goals, this Platform focuses on the dual strengthening of each link of the food chain in each country of the Region, starting with the empowerment of intrinsic capacities and the fostering of intraregional cooperation.

This new initiative will promote the development of intrinsic capacities in Latin America and the Caribbean so that food safety measures and programmes reflect the principles of the World Trade Organization and the recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius, the OIE and the IPPC, using a comprehensive approach that embraces all stakeholders, promoting the inherent development of each country and addressing the health objectives adopted at the Millennium Summit.

The Platform targets five guiding objectives covering each link of the food chain:

1. Strengthening the policy, legal and institutional framework for food safety in the Region through closer linkage with the food chain.
2. Strengthening cooperation among stakeholder groups and promoting proactive partnerships in support of food safety at country and regional level.

3. Boosting the capacity of food inspection services and testing laboratories to ensure food safety and quality for domestic and foreign consumption in accordance with international recommendations.
4. Enabling food producers, processors, traders, consumers and other stakeholder groups to contribute effectively to safety of the food chain through the growing empowerment of their own capacities.
5. Enhancing national and regional capacity to prevent and control food-borne diseases and monitor microbiological and chemical contaminants.

Each objective defines a set of actions to unfold in national or regional projects for its realization and achievement of the expected outcomes. The objectives instigate intra- and cross-sectoral cooperation, the promotion of new and pre-existing networks, the empowerment of stakeholder capacities and the strengthening of national inspection and control systems and accredited laboratories. Consideration has been given to different thematic thrusts of topical international importance to the Region, including GAPs, GHPs, GMPs, SOES and HACCP as systems that promote food safety, with attention also paid to issues such as the monitoring of contaminants and residues, epidemiological surveillance and registration at national and regional levels.

Some of the key outcomes expected from the implementation of national or subregional projects based on components of this Platform are:

- Ongoing improvement in production practices and techniques of small and medium producers with a positive impact on their quality of life (health, nutritional status, etc.) and on the safety of their products.
- Greater awareness among large producers which enhances the integrated management of their production and the safety levels of foods produced.
- Increased application of good management practices throughout the food chain, maintaining resultant quality and safety levels all the way from raw material to consumer.
- Empowerment of the food industry, generating the spread of good practices and risk management systems (like the HACCP) that guarantee the safety of food products, through recognition of its personal role in protecting consumer health.
- Ongoing increase in safety of food products sold and consumed in each country with improvements in public health indicators.
- Bolstering of inspection and control capacities of national services and testing laboratories associated with the protection of food safety and consumer health.
- Increased intraregional cooperation on food safety issues with a strengthening of food safety based on intrinsic capacities of each country of the Region.

The direct beneficiaries of each project under this Platform will be all the food chain players, from the food safety authorities (general and regulatory) at different national levels, through the food industry, producers, processors, rural and urban distributors and retailers, to the consumer associations and consumers themselves.

The envisaged activities have been planned in two inter-related stages:

- (a) a first stage with regional and subregional activities to develop core understanding and skills in priority areas of general interest, building the pillars for regional cooperation and activities at country level and a more efficient use of resources, and
- (b) a second stage for the development of national food safety policies with follow-up activities adjusted to specific needs and requirements, implementing and building upon the skills and practices learned and strengthening the intrinsic capacities of each country.

The Platform has focused at all times on promoting an integrated approach to the food chain in a framework of *biosafety*, treating food safety, animal health and plant protection in a comprehensive manner, together with the need to adopt an institutional framework that integrates and coordinates with food control systems.

Given that the Platform will be the basis for implementation of national, subregional and regional projects supported by international financial organizations and technical cooperation agencies, each Delegation should refer this Platform to its Government for promotion through its corresponding Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Acting through appropriate channels, Delegations should also promote this Platform among donor bodies, technical cooperation agencies, the *Standards and Trade Development Facility* and all other potential donors.

For purposes of regional uniformity, the CCLAC Coordination will publish this Platform, after consensual amendment by the Working Group, for downloading by each Delegation, thereby avoiding inconsistencies in its national and international promotion.

The countries of the Region should also identify operational thrusts for future projects that can be agreed and combined at regional and subregional level for identification of funds from international cooperation and financing agencies. The CCLAC webpage (www.cclac.org) can serve as the conduit for the delivery and exchange of related information.

**ELECTRONIC FORA - CCLAC WEBPAGE
AND
SURVEYS FOR CONSUMERS AND CCLAC MEMBERS**

1ST FORUM LEVEL - CODEX CONTACT POINTS

- Based on the considerations raised at the present session, the first matter to be discussed in this forum should be antimicrobial resistance. This will constitute a helpful tool for the Working Group set up at this session and chaired by Brazil for the consideration of this matter. This is also associated with the creation of the new *Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Antimicrobial Resistance*.
- Another matter identified has been the incorporation in this forum level of the tables submitted by Mexico in CRD 10 aimed at measuring the effective participation of the Members of the Region in Codex meetings and the submission of comments on Circular Letters.
- Other topics as defined in the report of the present session of the Committee.

2ND FORUM LEVEL - INTERGOVERNMENTAL

- The availability of data relating to the populations' diet of CCLAC member countries has been identified as a priority issue for the Region. The forum objective is to exchange information and experiences that may reflect the reality of the region.

In this regard, members are encouraged to identify what international, regional or national organizations may provide information on this issue.

Also, the use of the same protocol is recommended to facilitate data reading.

- In addition, identification of practical food safety problems associated with tourism is highlighted as a priority issue for this forum. The forum should exchange information to propose actions that may be carried out in the region in order to respond to the identified problems.
- Another issue to be addressed is the identification of regional experts to respond to specific needs for technical and scientific capacity. The forum should promote experts' work regionally and internationally.
- Other topics as defined in the report of the present session of the Committee.

3RD FORUM LEVEL - CIVIL SOCIETY

- It has been suggested that participation should first be approached by means of surveys that provide information on consumers' level of knowledge on food labelling.

Thus, a model survey is presented in Annex I for consideration by CCLAC members.

Further, it would be useful to request the individuals completing the survey to state their nationality in order to measure participation by the countries of the Region in this forum.

ANNEX I
SURVEYS FOR CONSUMERS
- 3RD FORUM LEVEL -

1. When buying food... how do you rate this information? (Number them 1-7, 1 being the first element considered)

Brand	
Price	
Sell-by-date	
Nutritional information	
Net contents	
List of ingredients	
Other: what?	

2. In connection with the “Date of Minimum Durability”...

a. When buying food, how often do you verify that the product is not past its sell-by-date?	always	
	sometimes	
	hardly ever	
	never	
b. And when eating it at home?	always	
	sometimes	
	hardly ever	
	never	
c. Do you take into account product preservation instructions?	always	
	sometimes	
	hardly ever	
	never	

3.

Do you think it is important to declare the percentage of the ingredients highlighted in product labels or characterizing elements?	Yes	No
Do you take this information into account when buying food?	Yes	No

4.

How often do you read the nutritional information provided on packaged food labels?	always	
	sometimes	
	hardly ever	
	never	
Rate (in terms of importance) the declaration of the energy value and the following substances when reading nutritional information.	Energy value	
	Carbohydrates	
	Fats	
	Proteins	
	Dietary fiber	
	Sodium	
	Other mineralss (calcium, iron, others)	
Vitamins (vit A, C, D, E, others)		

Do you know why consumption of these substances should be prudent (or low)?	Saturated fats	Yes	No
	Trans fats	Yes	No
	Cholesterol	Yes	No
	Sodium	Yes	No
	Sugars	Yes	No
Do you know the meaning of % DRV (percentage of daily reference value)		Yes	No

ANNEX II

Table 1
Participation in the work of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

CIRCULAR LETTER	CL 2006/40-FA	CL 2006/46-CF	CL 2006/38-AMR	CL 2006/52-RVDF
SUBJECT	Food additives	Food contaminants	Antimicrobial resistance	Residues of veterinary drugs
Deadline	January 2007	February 2007	March 2007	May 2007
Country 1				
Country 2				
Country 3				
Other countries				

Countries answering in time or after the deadline may be identified by a code (key).

Table 2
Participation in sessions of the Commission and its subsidiary bodies

Session	15th CCLAC	Working Group on GMOs Labelling (CCFL)	35th CCFL	30th CAC
Date of the meeting	November 2006	February 2007	May 2007	July 2007
Country 1				
Country 2				
Country 3				
Other countries				

The number of delegates participating in the meeting may be indicated.