

AGENDA ITEM 6(B): UPDATING BY OBSERVERS

Information provided by the Codex Alimentarius Commission at the
TBT Committee Meeting of 23 March 2004

1. Codex Sessions since the last Meeting of the TBT Committee (07/11/2003)

- (a) The 19th Session Committee on General Principles (Special Session) (Paris, France, 17-21 November 2003).
- (b) The 12th Session of Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems (Brisbane, Australia, 1-5 December 2003).
- (c) The 53rd Session Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 4-6 February 2004).
- (d) The 10th Session of Codex Committee on Meat Hygiene (Auckland, New Zealand, 16-20 February 2004).
- (e) The 25th Session Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling (Budapest, Hungary, 7-14 March 2004).

1. The special (19th) session of the **Codex Committee on General Principles** has considered rules to implement some of the recommendations of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius.

2. In particular, the Committee has agreed to forward to the 27th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission: (1) Proposed Amendments to Rules of Procedure, regarding the Executive Committee and the Budget and Expenses; (2) Proposed Amendments to the Procedures for the Elaboration of Codex Standards and Related Texts, related to the critical review of standards and related texts; (3) Draft Criteria for the Appointment of Chairpersons; (4) Draft Guidelines to Host Governments of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces; (5) Guidelines on the Conduct of Meetings of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces; and, (6) Draft Guidelines to Chairpersons of Codex Committees and *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Forces.

3. The Committee also agreed to consider further the revision of the Rule of Procedure on the participation of international organisations and the status of observers in the Executive Committee, the review of the Principles Concerning the Participation of International Non-Governmental Organizations in the Work of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the revision of the Criteria for the Establishment of Work Priorities, the Draft Guidelines on Physical Working Groups and the Draft Guidelines on Electronic Working Groups.

4. The 12th Session of the **Codex Committee on Food Import and Export Inspection and Certification Systems** advanced the proposed draft Principles and Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Safety Emergency Situations (Revision of the *Codex Guidelines for the Exchange of Information in Food Control Emergency Situations*) for final adoption by the next

Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, and decided not to pursue work on the judgment of equivalence of technical regulations associated with food inspection and certification systems at the current time. The Committee agreed to continue its discussion on traceability/product tracing in the context of food inspection and certification systems. The Committee agreed to initiate new work on Appendices to the Guidelines on the Judgement of Equivalence of Sanitary Measures Associated with Food Inspection and Certification Systems; Principles for Electronic Certification; and Guidelines for Risk-based Inspection of Imported Foods, pending approval by the Commission.

5. The 53rd Session of the **Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission** discussed matters related to the implementation of the Joint FAO/WHO Evaluation of the Codex Alimentarius and Other FAO and WHO Work on Food Standards. It also noted a progress report on the FAO/WHO Project and Trust Fund for Enhanced Participation in Codex. While the threshold for the Trust Fund would be reached soon to make the Fund operational shortly, it agreed with a view that the current level of funding was too low and that FAO and WHO should more actively seek sources of funding, and in particular, that this issue should be raised in the WTO Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures.

6. The 25th Session of the Codex **Committee on Methods of Analysis and Sampling** considers general issues related to methodology. In particular, during the last session, were discussed: (1) Draft General Guidelines on Sampling; (2) Draft General Guidelines on Measurement Uncertainty; (3) Criteria for Evaluating Acceptable Methods of Analysis; and, (4) Criteria for the Methods for Detection and Identification of Foods Derived from Biotechnology.

2. Forthcoming Codex Meetings

- (a) The 36th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Additives and Contaminants (Rotterdam, The Netherlands, 22-26 March 2004).
- (b) The 36th Session of the Codex Committee on Food Hygiene (Washington DC, United States, 29 March - 3 April 2004).
- (c) The 36th Session of the Codex Committee on Pesticide Residues (New Delhi, India, 19-24 April 2004).
- (d) The 6th Session of the Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products (Auckland, New Zealand, 26-30 April 2004).
- (e) The 20th Session of the Codex Committee on General Principles (Paris, France, 3-7 May 2004).
- (f) The 32nd Session of the Codex Committee on Food Labelling (Montreal, Canada, 10-14 May 2004).
- (g) The 5th Session of the *ad hoc* Intergovernmental Task Force on Animal Feeding (Copenhagen, Denmark, 17-19 May 2004).
- (h) The 54th Session Executive Committee of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 24-26 June 2004).
- (i) The 27th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Geneva, Switzerland, 28 June - 3 July 2004).

7. The 6th Session of the **Codex Committee on Milk and Milk Products** will be primarily involved in the further elaboration and revision of a number of standards for milk products which

includes, among others, standards for: (i) milk products with vegetable fat; (ii) 16 individual cheese varieties; (iii) dairy spreads; (iv) processed cheese; and, (v) whey cheeses. The Committee will also continue the elaboration of the model export certificate for milk and milk products.

8. In addition to procedural issues, the 20th Session of the **Codex Committee on General Principles** will consider the Proposed Draft Working Principles for Risk Analysis for Food Safety, the Proposed Draft Revised Code of Ethics for International Trade in Foods, and the Definition of Traceability/ Product Tracing of Foodstuffs.

9. The 32nd Session of the **Codex Committee on Food Labelling** will consider the following questions: (1) Labelling of Foods and Food Ingredients Obtained through Certain Techniques of Genetic Modification / Genetic Engineering; (2) Draft Guidelines for Use of Health and Nutrition Claims (inclusion of health claims); (3) Guidelines for the Production, Processing, Labelling and Marketing of Organically Produced Foods: Draft Revised: Revision of the list of Permitted Substances; and, (4) Proposed Draft Amendment to the *General Standard for the Labelling of Prepackaged Foods*: Quantitative Declaration of Ingredients. It will also consider whether to proceed with work on the issues of "Food Labelling and Traceability/ Product Tracing" and "Country of Origin Labelling".

10. The **Codex Alimentarius Commission** will hold its 27th Session in the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG) from 28 June to 3 July 2004, preceded by the 54th Session of the Executive Committee. This is in accordance with the decision of 26th Session of the Commission to hold annual meetings of the Commission. The 27th Session will consider, among others, draft Codex standards at Step 8, proposed drafts at Step 5, proposals for new work as well as proposals to amend the Rules of Procedure and other texts in the Procedural Manual.

3. Membership of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

11. The European Community and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines have joined the Commission as new Members since October 2003. As of 1 March 2004, the membership of the Codex Alimentarius Commission comprises 170 Member Nations and one Member Organization.
