

# **Codex Alimentarius Commission (28th Session) Rome, Italy NHF Update on Codex Proceedings Currently in Session**

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The Codex Alimentarius Commission is an international body, operating under the auspices of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO), that is charged with establishing food standards that will be implemented worldwide. One of the food standards being set is for vitamin-and-mineral food supplements, overseen by one of the Commission's Committees that meets annually in Bonn, Germany. That Committee had just last November prepared and sent to its parent Commission a draft Guidelines for Vitamin and Mineral Food Supplements that would greatly restrict consumer access to vitamins and minerals.

The *National Health Federation*, a U.S.-based international nonprofit organization of health consumers seeking to preserve health freedom in their various countries has attended Codex meetings for years and is the only health-freedom organization with a voice at the Codex meetings. In its efforts to oppose harsh and restrictive Codex standards, the *NHF* has been supported at these meetings by many other organizations and individuals, including the Danish-based MayDay, the Canadian-based Friends of Freedom International, the Italian-based La Leva, and the UK-based Alliance for Natural Health.

On Independence Day 2005, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, meeting in Rome, Italy for its 28th Session, quickly went down a list of many Codex guidelines for approval. It was obvious to all that the Chairman, a Swede, was hell-bent for leather to get every single one of the guidelines approved by the Commission. A rhythm of approval was quickly set.

When the Chairman reached the draft Guidelines for Vitamin and Mineral Food Supplements, the momentum slowed just for a moment as the Chairman dealt with some last-minute revisions sought by Australia, Venezuela, and China. The first two countries' revisions were deemed technical while China's was determined by the Chairman to be substantive. The last ruling was important because if a change sought by a country was substantive, then the guideline could not be approved and must be sent back to its Committee for re-review.

After these countries were heard, the Chairman recognized the *National Health Federation*. *NHF's* head delegate and General Counsel, Scott Tips, then spoke out as the sole voice against adoption of the draft Guideline by the Commission. Arguing that they were defective and must be sent back to Committee, Mr. Tips gave three main reasons: (1) According to Codex's own Procedural Manual, guidelines must state a

purpose for those guidelines in the Preface and the draft Vitamin-and-Mineral Food Supplement Guidelines do not contain a purpose, (2) The Guidelines fail to define what vitamins and minerals are covered by the Guidelines since they refer to an FAO/WHO list of approved vitamins and minerals that does not even exist and therefore it is unclear as to what would be covered by the Guidelines; and (3) The comments made by China, and the changes sought by China to the Guidelines, were substantive and according to the Codex Rules of Procedure as stated on page 27 of the Manual of Procedure, any substantive amendment must be sent back to the Committee and dealt with at the committee level.

After the *NHF* spoke, a so-called organization of supplement associations, called IADSA, then argued in favor of the adoption of the Guidelines.

Ignoring the blatant procedural defects, and with all of the countries silent on the issue of health freedom, the Chairman simply acted as he wished. He brushed aside the substantiveness of the Chinese-requested changes, completely failed to address the issue of those defects, and decided on his own that the Guidelines were adopted.

In doing so, the Chairman made a complete mockery of the Codex Alimentarius Commission. He ignored and mocked its own rules of procedure and he showed that the Commission is being run as an autocracy and not a democracy. At least now, it can be clearly seen by the World that the Commission needs to be completely reformed before it continues any of its important works.