

# Codex Alimentarius Commission

## Transcript from part of a meeting held in Rome, Italy, on Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2005.

### Agenda item 9

#### *Financial and Budgetary Matters*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** *Well, let's gather our courage into both hands, and sort of try to pick our patience here.*

*We are now going to delve into financial matters, and financial and budgetary matters. And I would call on you to take out the germane document, which is ALINORM 05/28/9 and INF 15. I would like to draw your attention to the report of the Executive Committee; that's 05/28/3A, paragraphs 22 to 29.*

*Without further ado, I'd like to ask my friend Mr. Miyagishma to take the floor and introduce this agenda item for consideration by the Commission.*

*You have the floor Sir.*

**Mr. Miyagishma (Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission):** *Thank you very much. I don't know to what extent I can speak in the French here, but I'll do my best Sir, because you made a magnificent opening statement there in French.*

*Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished delegates, as indicated by the chairperson the document we shall now examine for this agenda item is /09, which provides the financial and budget information regarding the operation of Codex Alimentarius as such.*

*As indicated in paragraph 3 of said document, there is another information document prepared as well by the two mother organizations of Codex, that is FAO and WHO, or the two parents, put it that way, and this document is entitled INF.15.*

*Mr. Chairman, with your kind forbearance, I would like to introduce paragraph /9 and after that once again with your permission Sir I'll give the floor to my colleagues at FAO and WHO respectively, to add any complementary points to my introduction.*

*Now, pursuant or in accordance with rule 12.1 of the Commission's Rules of Procedure,*

*the Secretary submits the report of the budget situation to the Commission for consideration.*

*When it is a matter of a biennium exercise, and 2003, the Commission, at its last session, took note of the information on expenditures in the previous budget period. And at that selfsame session, took note of the financing for the Codex work for the present biennium.*

*So if you take a look at the middle of table 1, which is on page 3 in document ALINORM 05/28/9, you have exactly the same figures for this biennium, because those were the ones that were considered at the last session of the Commission.*

*In the right-hand column of that same table, under the heading 'Programme of Work 2006/2007', you see the budget proposal, for, as I said, the next biennium, which is 2006/2007. And obviously these are conditional figures; conditional, quite obviously, upon the discussion that will take place at FAO Council and FAO General Conference, scheduled to take place between now and the end of the year, that is, November.*

*And according to the global amount in FAO's budget, and according to the budget scenario espoused, or adopted by the FAO General Conference, the Codex budget for the next biennium may be different compared with what you see in the right-hand column of this table. So this table presupposes that WHO would contribute, nominally, the same amount compared to the past, that is, the same number for the next two years, and that the zero real growth scenario be adopted by the FAO General Conference. Those are the suppositions upon which this right-hand column has been drawn up.*

*In any case, with this scenario, our overall budget will be reduced by a few dozen thousand dollars. But by making savings here, there and elsewhere, for example, cutting back on some of our publication activities, the Secretariat is of the opinion that we will be able to maintain the same level of activities for the next two years.*

*So, Mr. Chairman, at this point in time, this is the budget of Codex 2006/2007, while awaiting confirmation from WHO regarding its level of contribution to the Codex programme, which is almost confirmed. WHO has already manifested its commitment and undertaking to respect that level of contribution. We just have to see if FAO is able to confirm its contribution in line with the ZRG proposal, or zero nominal growth proposal scenario.*

*So, Mr. Chairman, thank you, that is my presentation.*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** *Thank you very much, the Secretariat.*

*Perhaps we could turn to WHO and FAO for any additional information they wish to provide to the Commission Members? Who's leading off, FAO, WHO?*

**FAO:** *Thank you Sir.*

*First of all I would like to bring to the attention of this Commission that the Codex programme at FAO always enjoys priority in budget allocation exercises within FAO and shall continue to retain that priority position.*

*Now the FAO Counsel that met in here two weeks ago has reiterated its support to said programme, Codex programme, and has asked that FAO continue to protect that programme no matter which option is espoused with the FAO budget at the General Conference which shall take place in November this year.*

*Having said that, Sir, Mr. Chairman allow me to add some additional information, information requested by the Commission at its last session, and that is to provide information on the FAO and WHO budget amounts attributed or allocated to activities of scientific support, the expert committees that FAO and WHO operate in order to support Codex, as well as the technical support activities in the field for developing countries so they may be able to take more effective part in the work of Codex itself.*

*Now, if you take a look at document INF 15 you have a general overview of those expenditures. I'd just like to highlight the fact that in FAO, and afterwards I quite obviously give the floor to my colleague from WHO so he can report thereupon, but at FAO you see that ever since the biennium 2000.....there has been a net increase in the budget allocations made by FAO to the scientific support programme, and especially for the JEMRA activities, which is the scientific committee for the analysis of Microbiological Risk Analysis, and JECFA, and JMPR.*

*So, anything that has to do with allocations given to JECFA and JMPR, ever since 2000/2001, from 2001, 2004/2005, there has been a very, very sharp increase in the amount of money allocated by FAO and WHO, so it would be possible to respond to the ever more urgent and ever increasing demands coming from the various Codex committees for scientific support to the work they're doing.*

*Hence, the budget for JECFA and JMPR, which was \$500,000 in 2000/2001, has gone up to \$1,456,000 in 2004/2005. A very clear increase. And this was possible thanks to an exceptional allocation approved by the FAO Finance Committee, so that FAO, in the form of its Standards and Food Quality branch that deals with that matter, would be able to respond to the need to the updating of the Compendium on Food Additives and the development of the database on food additives.*

*So all of this information can basically be found in document INF/15. The total budget allocated by FAO in 2004/2005 for activities related or linked to scientific support is \$2,334,000, which is an appreciable amount of money, and which, let's here hope, that we shall maintain this level of support in the years to come.*

*So that's about all I have to say, Mr. Chairman.*

*Allow me to answer, that alongside the scientific support that FAO and WHO do provide to Codex, quite obviously, we also have the support to Member Countries, especially*

*developing Member Countries, in an effort to help them so they may participate in a much more impactful manner in Codex endeavours.*

*Now, quite a thrust in that activity over the last couple of years, because budget allocations are earmarked for said activities, and especially by the TCP (or the FAO Technical Cooperation Programme), which is a fund proper to FAO, increased over the last few years, and rather an appreciable amount as well. And we have more than thirty projects, I repeat, thirty projects, in the field, to a great extent financed by FAO, projects which do enable developing countries to benefit from that capacity building technical support.*

*So we are always below, I think, Member Countries would like to have, We are always looking for extra budgetary support for said activities and shall continue those search efforts. And especially with a view to providing technical support to developing countries.*

*Thank you very much, Sir, and I am prepared to field any questions that the Members of this Commission may wish to address to me.*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** *Thank you FAO. So I think we've taken note of the effort made by FAO to support the activity of Codex.*

**Dr. Schlundt (WHO):** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I think there's been from WHO side a concerted effort to try to push for more activities in Codex over the last six years.

If you look at the INF 15 document you will see that extra money was infused into the scientific advice from WHO in that biennium 0001. Actually, almost a million extra. That mainly went into microbiological risk assessment and to risk assessment in relation to biotech foods.

In order to also strengthen the Codex mechanism itself we initiated together with FAO the evaluation of Codex, and the outcome of that evaluation was taken to the World Health Assembly, who clearly stated, again a clear statement of the importance of Codex, and, the importance of the WHO support to Codex.

As a result, the WHO contribution to the Codex budget increased by 26 percent, from 02/03 to 04/05, and the FAO contribution increased with this, approximately with the same percentage.

So, I think, if you look at the figures, they give the clear picture that the mother and father, or is it two mothers, or.....are really providing a lot to the kid. We would now also hope that the kid will be able to deliver at the end.

And might I here also just put in a small remark that when the outcome of the Codex evaluation came out, and when the discussions were there in the World Health Assembly,

there was a clear direction that we need to do more for human health through the Codex mechanism.

We would hope that some of these initiatives that have been going on over the last six years would also result in some tangible outcomes, so that we can show the world that Codex is actually helping also in relation to public health.

But I think the figures show the picture that there is a commitment, and that there has been, over that long period, a strategic redirection of funding into scientific advice and into the Codex system.

We would hope then also in the future that we would be able to attract maybe more extra-budgetary funding for the scientific advice needed for Codex, because, as we have stated several times, also at this meeting, the needs for scientific advice are clearly increasing.

Thank you very much.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you WHO.

The.....the.....I draw your attention to the Executive Committee.....report, particularly paragraph 26 and, to 29. There you will find the concerns expressed by the Executive Committee here, in the previous session of the Executive Committee.

So the.....so I just draw your attention, and I mention that the table 1 is the budget for Codex, and table 2 is the.....the, for scientific advice. So it's a different thing.

So, and.....we have to finish.....we have to finish this session by 5.40, at least, latest, and we have to finish also according to the schedule, item 12. So I think the.....your.....your information to be a very concise, and but not to speak too fast.

So floor is open. Any comments or.....Mexico.

**Mexico:** *Thank you Mr. Chairman.*

*We are very concise.*

*I've attended a number.....those who have attended a number of meetings will have heard the, already, complaints about the time it takes to translate documents into the other.....into the official languages of the Commission, and to make these documents.....*

*We appreciate the effort which has been indicated by the parent organizations to improve the efficiency of Codex, but we regret the fact that in such a simple matter as having translations in time, this means that it is very difficult for Codex Members to present their opinions in time.*

*In many Codex meetings there are documents which are not distributed in time beforehand, and which are not translated into the official languages. This is something which can be dealt with at various points in our meeting. I think in fact this is the right time to deal with this matter, as we are considering budgetary matters.*

*Mr. Chairman, we wish effective and creative measures to be taken to deal with this problem. And I will conclude, even though the red light's not on yet.*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you.

We note it, and we have this complaints repeatedly, and Secretariat, the Executive Committee is struggling with this matter.

Thank you. Other comments? Venezuela.

**Venezuela:** *Thank you Mr. Chairman.*

*There's one substantive matter, which deals with the approval of the World Health Assembly in May of Geneva, of the revised regulation 2005, in which Codex could contribute to focus resources, and in the.....it's also related incredibly to capacity building, which is very important for developing countries, and so as not to quite lead to failures to cover the area of production and processing foods.*

*This is something which should be dealt with in 2007, and not all countries have the capacity to deal with this by that time.*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you. Your comments have been noted, and the.....this matter will come up later also. Thank you.

Other comments? Chile.

**Chile:** *Thank you Mr. Chairman.*

*First of all wish to express our thanks for the efforts of WHO and FAO to maintain the current budget and we note that another sister organization underwent a drastic cut in their budget, however we also share the concern of Mexico, with regard to the use of languages, particularly in the fact that.....particularly with regard to computer-based or electronic groups and work, and where the use of language will be very important in taking part in that kind of work.*

*In the next subject we'll see there were 20 expert recommendations, and these would have a budgetary impact.*

*Thank you Mr. Chairman.*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you. OK. United States.

**United States:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

The United States wishes to endorse the concerns that were expressed by the Executive Committee in paragraph 29.

United States urges the parent organizations to continue to show support for the Codex programme.

We are heartened by the statements by FAO, but we are concerned that WHO assign a higher priority to budgetary support for the entire Codex programme from its regular budget.

Thank you Mr. Chairman.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you. Netherlands.

**Netherlands:** Thank you Chair.

I expressed my worry earlier on as Chair of the CCFAC, and now as the Netherlands. As host of two committees we again want to stress our worry about the risk assessment side of JECFA, and JEMRA, and JMPR.

And I think that also is....I want to endorse what the Executive Committee stated on that point, and I think it's right to express that worries again here, and especially the WHO side and the budgetary problems over that.

Thank you.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Canada. Thank you.

**Canada:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

For brevity, we would support the comments made before us, and in particular we would note our endorsement of the views expressed by the Executive Committee, and would recommend that the views reported in the report of the Executive Committee be replicated in the report of the Commission.

Thank you.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you Canada. New Zealand.

**New Zealand:** Thank you Chairman.

Very briefly, we support the comments just made by Canada, and previously by Netherlands and United States.

I think we share the concerns that have been expressed in the Executive Committee about the budgetary situation, and the one point that we would like to highlight and underline is the critical need for WHO to increase its relative contribution to the Codex budget from its regular programmes, consistent with the joint nature of the Codex Food Standards Programme.

Thank you.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you. Morocco.

**Morocco:** *Thank you Mr. Chairman.*

*I was just reading the document INF/15, table 1. I'm not sure whether I'm reading this right with regard to WHO contributions from 2000/2001 through 2004/2005. I'll just say that the funds for 2004/2005 are practically half of what was provided in 2000/2001. Is this a 30 percent reduction compared with 2002/2003?*

*Could we have some explanation for this reduction, at a time when needs are increasing, and at a time when Codex standards and documents are growing in importance?*

*And with regard to the budget for 2006/2007, I understood from the Secretariat that savings could be made on publications. I'd just like to draw your attention....I think we always say this, but we need to say that you should understand the difficulties of developing countries, particularly those in Africa with regard to electronic distribution of texts. They will still need printed documents and printed publications.*

*This is a point we will come back to, I'm sure, but in view of the difficulties contact points face, and the need to strengthen contact points and national Codex committees, a number of countries still do not have the requisite hardware and software to access these electronic documents, and even when they do have these resources often they don't have an internet connection, so I think these needs have to be taken into consideration.*

*Thank you.*

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you.

The Members in this room have concern on the support from WHO on the scientific advice, and it's very difficult. Let me see, who's that.....ah, India, sorry.

**India:** Thank you Mr. Chair.

Along with other delegations.....thank you Mr. Chair.

We would also like to support the concern expressed by the Executive Committee, because the support to the scientific advice which comes to the Commission link all of



the work, and we would request WHO to re-examine its support and at least maintain to the levels which it was in 2000/2001.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you India.

I think the WHO representative had too much work!

So I ask WHO to respond to some extent. So, WHO please.

**WHO:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

I have to answer for the record that we hear you but I don't think you go about it in the right way.

This is not going to work because the Executive Board of Codex and the Commission are going to be perceived by WHO governing bodies as an interested party.

So you are asking the governing bodies of WHO, as an interested party, to increase a share in our budget for your work.

Now, if WHO would always listen to all the external interested parties, I can assure you our budget would be blown in no time.

So I think the only way forward is that you go back home and you talk to your colleagues in ministries of health, and you ask them to speak up in the WHO Executive Board and in the World Health Assembly, and that they ask this, because at the last WHO World Health Assembly guess how many Member States represented by ministries of health spoke on the issue of Codex? One!

One Member State asked a question.

And that is just the truth of the matter.

What I, from the Secretariat have to tell you, is that WHO, at this point, the Secretariat, the Director-General, is allocating 2 percent of the overall budget to food safety work in the organization.

Now please do go back and ask your colleagues in ministries of health how much of their budget goes to food safety-related work, and I'm sure you will have a very, very harsh awakening.

So I think if you want to get away from just griping about not getting enough money from the health community, we have to do it the proper way, and the proper way is that those that represent your countries in the governing bodies of WHO need to speak up on this.

For now, I can only assure you that we in the Secretariat are doing our damnest to get the funds that you need in.....from us to get the scientific advice, and to the support of the Codex machinery.

Thank you.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you WHO.

I think the.....there may be more delegations who wants to intervene, but I think the.....it's very important that to record your concerns as to the provision of scientific advice from.....particularly from WHO. Or, FAO/WHO.

That we record it, and then we echoed also the intervention from.....response from WHO. And we that record we express our concern to the world, to.....across countries. So in that way we can manage.....we can advance, somehow.

So, I'd like to.....ok. Go ahead.

**Dr. Schlundt (WHO):** Yeah, I think I.....I just have to add to this that when there is a reference to the level that we had in 0001, which was very high as you can see in table 1, it was 1.6 million, that was extra money put into this so that we could start up microbiological risk assessment.

So we did Salmonella, Campylobacter, Vibrio.....and Lysteria. And we put them out very, very quickly into the Codex system. We initiated work on biotechnology, and we put it directly into the biotech task force.

Now, we also need, I think also, the World Health Assembly also needs to see that something is then happening to this extra influx of money. And it's difficult if we cannot see that something is happening with this extra influx.

It would be difficult to make the arguments in the World Health Assembly where the countries, you, all your countries, also had to take all the other priorities into consideration.

So we hope, you know, that we can also really see some outcome out of the extra money that was actually put in here from WHO.

Thank you.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you Dr. Schlundt. The matter of scientific advice comes up later, and we may have to have debate on efficient way of .....ok. Switzerland. Thank you.

**Switzerland:** Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Switzerland strongly supports the statement made by the United States, and the concern pronounced by the Executive Committee.

We think food safety is the main concern in health, and should find its expression within the budget of WHO.

Switzerland also believes that WHO has a certain responsibility to show a cost-benefit relations and risk assessments, which clearly direct that food safety is a main point in health concern.

We congratulate WHO for the demands which they have already achieved at this goal, and we encourage the responsible person to provide further financial resources to achieve our common aims.

Thank you.

**Vice-Chair (Hiroshi Yoshikura):** Thank you.

I'd like to finish with by saying that the Commission would like to express its desire that the FAO and WHO maintain the adequate budgetary level for Codex, as well as activities supporting Codex, in the next few years, and the.....and at the same time we appreciate the continuing endeavour in both organizations for support of Codex. And we assure you that your concerns, and the response from WHO, will be noted in the records of this meeting.

Thank you.

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*Quoted text shown in italics was transcribed using a real-time translation into English by the official Codex interpreters.*

*Transcribed from audio recordings available online in English at*  
[ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/audio/cac\\_28/audio\\_en.htm](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/audio/cac_28/audio_en.htm)

See [ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/audio/cac\\_28/recordings\\_en/05-07-05%20PM%203.mp3](ftp://ftp.fao.org/codex/audio/cac_28/recordings_en/05-07-05%20PM%203.mp3)  
(Tuesday, 5 July, 14:30-17:30, Part 3).