



CODEX OPERATIONS

Codex Procedural Manual

The **Codex Procedural Manual** is one of the most important Codex documents as it contains:

- the **Statutes** of the Commission;
- the **Rules of Procedure**; and
- additional **procedural information** relevant to how the Commission and its subsidiary bodies function.



Statutes of the Codex

The **Statutes** of the Codex Alimentarius Commission:



- provide the **legal basis** for the Commission's work;
- provide its **mandate** or terms of reference;
- describe the **formal operating procedures**; and
- reflect the **concepts** behind and **reasons** for the establishment of Codex.

Article 1 – Mandate

- (a) Protecting the health of consumers and ensuring fair practices in the food trade.*
- (b) Coordinating all food standards work undertaken by international governmental and non-governmental organizations.*
- (c) Determining priorities and initiating and guiding the preparation of draft standards.*
- (d) Finalizing standards and publishing them in a Codex Alimentarius either as regional or worldwide standards.*
- (e) Amending published standards, after appropriate survey in the light of developments.*



Article 2 – Membership

Membership of the Commission is open to all Member Nations and Associate Members of FAO and WHO that are interested in international food standards.

Membership shall comprise such of these nations as have notified the Director-General of FAO or of WHO of their desire to be considered as Members.



Article 6 – Executive Committee

The Commission shall establish an Executive Committee whose composition should ensure an adequate representation of the various geographical areas of the world to which the Members of the Commission belong.

Between sessions, the Executive Committee shall act as the executive organ of the Commission.

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS



Food and Agriculture
Organization of the
United Nations



World Health
Organization



GLOBAL FOOD REGULATORY
SCIENCE SOCIETY

*Extracted from FAO
Training Material*

Summary

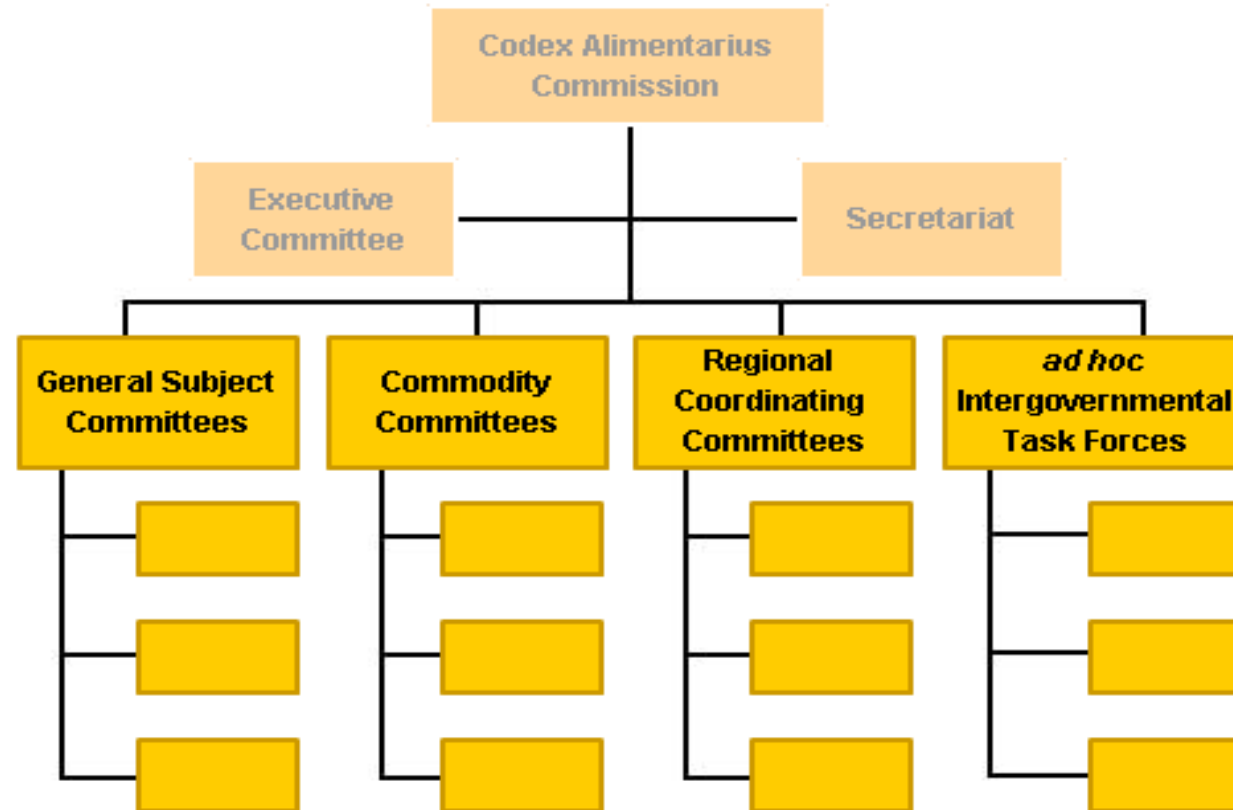
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- ❑ FAO and WHO have established the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme, for the elaboration of international food standards.
- ❑ The CAC is an intergovernmental body established to develop food standards under the Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme.
- ❑ The collection of food standards and related texts adopted by the CAC is known as the Codex Alimentarius.
- ❑ The Codex Procedural Manual contains the Statutes of the Commission, its Rules of Procedure, and additional procedural information relevant to how the Commission and its subsidiary bodies function.
- ❑ One of the primary mandate of the Codex Commission is to protect the health of consumers and ensure fair practices in the food trade.
- ❑ In order for a country to become a member of the CAC, the country must be a member of either FAO or of WHO and it needs to notify either the Director-General of FAO or of WHO that it wishes to become a member.

General Structure

Codex Subsidiary Bodies



Function of the Subsidiary Bodies

Codex **subsidiary bodies** (except the Coordinating Committees) are expected to:

Draw up a list of priorities among the subjects and products within their terms of reference.

Consider the safety and quality elements to be covered.

Consider the types and scope of products to be covered by standards.

Prepare draft Codex standards (including guidelines and codes of practice).

Report to each session of the Commission on the progress of their work.

Review and revise existing standards and related texts periodically.

Function of the Coordinating Committees

The main functions of **Coordinating Committees** are:

promote **mutual exchange of information** on proposed regulatory initiatives and problems arising from food control;

promote the **use of Codex standards** in the region, and monitor the use of adopted Codex texts; and

exercise the general **coordination in the preparation of standards** related to the specific region or groups of countries.

Composition of Codex Committees

All Codex committees consist of the following members:



- ❖ a chairperson;
- ❖ a body of members;
- ❖ observers who have speaking privileges but not voting right; and
- ❖ a secretariat and a host government (including Secretariat) that facilitates the work of the committee.

Chairperson

The CAC designates as host country of a committee a member country which has declared to accept all the responsibilities associated with it.



The member country concerned is responsible for appointing the **chairperson** of the committee from among its own nationals.

Members

- **Member of Codex committees** are members of the CAC who have responded to the invitation of the Director-General of FAO or WHO of participating in the Committee.
- Other Codex member countries may attend, as **observers**, meetings of coordinating committees other than those to which they are geographically allocated.
- Only committee Members can **make decisions** on issues under consideration.

Observers

- International organizations with official **Observer Status in Codex** may also participate in meetings of the various Codex Committees and Task Forces as well as in working groups established.
- Observers may make interventions, submit written comments, etc, but **only Members (i.e. countries) make decisions.**
- Countries that are not members of the Commission, but are members of the UN, FAO or WHO may also attend Codex Committee meetings as observers.

Secretariat

The principal secretariat is the **Codex Secretariat**, it is **international** and is based in Rome. Its tasks include:

- coordinating documentation for the meeting;
- advising the Chairperson of the Committee on technical and procedural matters;
- preparing the report of the meeting.

There's also a **host country secretariat (national)**, who assists the Codex Secretariat in coordinating documentation for the meeting and is mainly responsible for logistic aspects.

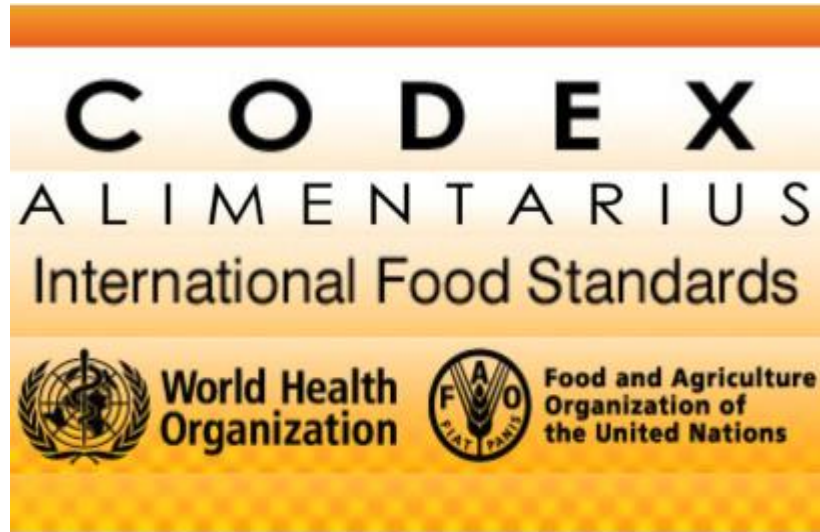
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Participation in Codex Using Codex Standards



Scheduling of meetings of Codex Committees is done by the **Codex Secretariat** in Rome in consultation with the **Codex Contact Point of the country hosting** the respective Codex committee.

The meetings are based on a **biennial planning cycle**.

Meeting Format

All Codex sessions follow the same format

- 1) There may be an official or **formal opening** of the session.
- 2) The chairperson proceeds to the **adoption of the provisional agenda and** invites observations from members of the committee concerning the provisional agenda.
- 3) Any member country may request the addition of **additional items** to the provisional agenda.

Session Procedures

Chairpersons of Codex committees are expected to ensure that **all comments on the standard being elaborated are fully discussed.**



Chairpersons are also expected to ensure that the committee **considers the written comments** of Members not present at the session and that all issues are put clearly to the committee.

Expressing Your Nation's View

How can members express their country's views at a meeting?

- **Members and observers are permitted to intervene** on issues under consideration by the committee.
- Protocol states that Members speak before observers, and delegations speak only when acknowledged by the chairperson.



- Normally, it **is the head delegate who has the right to speak** but, with the chair's permission, another member of the delegation may speak on technical matters.

Expressing Your Nation's View (2)



There are no precise rules within Codex regarding the **number and duration of interventions.**

The general practice is to intervene only once on any particular issue.

Interventions should be **as short and clear as possible** (2/3 minutes) and one should speak slowly enough to allow for good interpretation.

Reaching Consensus

The chairperson always tries to **arrive at a consensus**.
If consensus cannot be reached, the usual practice is to:

- 1) Defer the issue for discussion at the next session.
- 2) Establish a working group to address those points where consensus cannot be reached.
- 3) Refer the issue to the Commission for guidance.
- 4) Recommend to the Commission that work on the issue be suspended or discontinued altogether

Voting at the committee level is extremely rare.

Objection to a Committee Decision

What if my country disagrees with a decision taken by the committee?



Although "**consensus**" has not been defined by Codex, it is generally agreed that **it does not necessarily mean that everybody is in total agreement (unanimous decision).**

In case of disagreement on a decision a country may request that its objections be recorded in the report of the committee.

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