European Community Comments on the Strategic Planning of the Codex Alimentarius Commission

(Agenda item 10, ALINORM 05/28/9A)

Member States Competence

Member States Vote

The Member States of the European Community (hereinafter referred to as “the MSEC”) welcome the opportunity to discuss the Strategic Planning of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

The MSEC note the progress made and fully support the endorsement of the course of action recommended by the 55th Session of the Executive Committee for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013. In particular, the MSEC support the new Strategic Plan structure and format comprising three parts as well as the procedure for its elaboration.

However, on the basis of the experience gained from the implementation of the current Strategic Plan (2003-2007), the MSEC would like to underline the following points:

− It seems that “Objective 2 (Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles and Risk Analysis)” has not been fulfilled. This may jeopardise the effective implementation of the Commission’s Action Plan on Risk Analysis by the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its Members as well as the maximum application of Codex Standards (Objective 6) and this should be taken into account for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013.

− Significant progress has been made by the Codex Alimentarius Commission concerning Objectives 4 and 5; the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 could be an opportunity for the effective implementation of Decisions taken following the 2002 Assessment.

The MSEC consider that in developing the 2008-2013 strategic plan it is essential to take account of the capacity within WHO/FAO for providing scientific advice to support activities identified in the plan.

The MSEC also wish to draw the attention of the Codex Alimentarius Commission to the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) Strategic Plan which intends in particular to clarify its policy areas as regards zoonoses.

The OIE's work programme for 2001-2005 recommended that "OIE should be more active in the area of public health and consumer protection," and noted that this should include "zoonoses and diseases transmissible to humans through food, whether or not animals are affected by such diseases". The Fourth OIE Strategic Plan (2006-2010) covers “Prevention, Control and Eradication of Animal Diseases including Zoonoses” and notes that “linkages with corresponding activities under “standards” should be made clear and strengthened, including those related to animal production food safety.”
More generally, the MSEC are of the opinion that cooperation with other relevant international organisations dealing with food standardisation should be improved, as it is essential to avoid co-existence of conflicting international standards and duplication of work. In addition it is of primary importance to confirm clear lines of demarcation between the officially recognised organisations while ensuring the coverage of the whole food chain.
The European Community and its 25 Member States (MSEC) appreciate the opportunity to address the Codex Alimentarius Commission’s request for comments for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013 (CL 2005/9-EXEC).

**General Comments**

- The MSEC note the progress made and fully support the endorsement of the course of action recommended by the 55th Session of the Executive Committee for the preparation of the Strategic Plan 2008-2013. In particular, the MSEC support the new Strategic Plan structure and format comprising three parts as well as the procedure for its elaboration.

- Objective 2 (Promoting Widest and Consistent Application of Scientific Principles and Risk Analysis) could be strengthened by making specific reference to the existing principles on risk analysis and adding a reference to developing guidance to facilitate the consistent application of risk analysis principles.

- Objective 4 of the Strategic Framework 2003-2007 (Enhance Capacity to Respond Effectively) remains particularly relevant in light of the discussions on the structure of the Codex committees. This objective will need revising following discussions at the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

**Specific Comments**

**Paragraph 12:** In accordance with comments already made by the MSEC under Agenda item 14 of the 28th Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission (Relations Between the Codex Alimentarius Commission and Other International Organizations; ALINORM 05/28/9E), the MSEC consider that it is of paramount importance that “the relevant international organizations, and their subsidiary bodies, in particular the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the International Office of Epizootics (OIE - World Organization for Animal Health), and the international and regional organizations operating within the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention” strengthen their cooperation, their coordination of work, and exchange information and expertise where appropriate.

Possible problems such as overlap of work, conflicting international standards (or lack of international standards) should be avoided. Technical consultations, *ad hoc* working groups or any other possible form of regular dialogue between the relevant international organizations, including FAO and WHO, should be encouraged.

To this end, a sentence could be added after the third sentence of paragraph 12:

“Priority should be given to linkages/relations between the main relevant international organizations, including FAO and WHO, and their subsidiary bodies, in particular the Codex Alimentarius Commission, the World Organization for Animal Health (OIE), and the international and regional organizations operating within the framework of the International Plant Protection Convention. Linkages with the relevant international conventions (e.g., Environment field) for Codex standards setting should also be considered as a priority.”
Typographical Comments

- In order to address both cases of Codex Member Countries and Member Organisation(s), the document should refer, where appropriate, to “Members” rather than to “Countries” or “Member Countries” which are more restrictive wordings (see in particular: two last sentences of paragraph 7; first bullet point of paragraph 8; second sentence of paragraph 12). This is already correctly done in some paragraphs (e.g., paragraphs 4; 13; 15; 16).

- **Paragraph 2:** On the existing framework the antepenultimate sentence in paragraph 2 about organic food (“A further development…in the future.”) could be deleted – it doesn’t really add anything.

- **Paragraph 3:** The word “new” (second word of the paragraph in “new recognition”) could be deleted as the WTO Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS Agreement), entered into force with the establishment of the World Trade Organization, on 1 January 1995, more than 10 years ago.

- **Paragraphs 5 and 18:** Footnotes 4 and 6 should be updated (Fourteenth Edition, p. 188, or similar reference in Fifteenth Edition).

- **Objective 3 (Promoting Linkages/ between Codex and other Multilateral Regulatory Instruments and Conventions):** The wording of Objective 3 could be further completed (the word “Relations” may be missing after “Linkages/”) or redrafted and simplified.