

Compliance Report
Okinawa 2000
Biotech

Commitment

Para. 56. “We attach strong importance to the work of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission (CAC), the principal standard-setting body in food safety, and encourage its Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology to produce a substantial interim report before completion of its mandate in 2003.”

Assessment

Country	Lack of Compliance -1	Work in Progress 0	Full Compliance +1
Britain			+1
Canada			+1
France			+1
Germany			+1
Italy			+1
Japan			+1
Russia	-1		
United States			+1
Overall			+1

This very particular commitment is based on the Second Session meeting of the International Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology held in Chiba, Japan, on March 25–29, 2001. Most of the G8 countries participated, in a variety of degrees, to produce a substantial interim report.

During this meeting, the main advancement was the approval of the Proposed Draft Principles for the Risk Analysis of Foods Derived from Modern Biotechnology as well as the Proposed Draft Guideline for the Conduct of Food Safety Assessment of Foods Derived from Recombinant-DNA Plants. The Second Session of the Task Force brought these proposals to the fifth stage in the eight-stage CODEX Elaboration of Standards procedure. The procedure establishes and allows for the discussion, before meeting approval or rejection, of CODEX’s operating principles and its developments.

Further advancement at the Second Session meeting came with the agreement to document the present status of validation of methods used by member countries that detect foods derived from biotechnology. Along with this came the recommendation to establish a register or repository containing relevant information on methods for the detection or identification of foods or food ingredients derived from biotechnology.

In addition, a discussion paper on the concept of traceability and an information paper on familiarity were advanced by the U.S. and French delegates, respectively, and discussed by the Task Force.

These advancements were compiled into a document for submission to the 24th Session of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission to be held from July 2–7, 2001, in Geneva.

Britain

Aside from sending its delegates to participate in the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology, Britain provided feedback on components of the First Session of the Task Force Committee, which led to the establishment of the March 2001 agenda for the Second Session. Therefore, Britain fully participated in the advancement of its commitment to support the work of the Task Force.

Canada

Much like Britain, Canada contributed the participation of its delegates, as well as comments and discussion to the Second Session meeting in Chiba. The exact contents of the delegation's comments, however, were not revealed in the official report, nor were the contents of the delegation's inquiry into the process and discussions from the First Session meeting. Indeed, no detail was provided to this extent for any country. Canada, therefore, receives merit for full participation for its contributions to furthering the goals of the Task Force and CODEX.

France

France sent delegates to the Second Session of the Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology and offered feedback and comments in the discussions of the agenda items. The French delegation also drafted the Discussion Paper on Traceability, which advanced agreement on the contentious issue of defining traceability. Traceability was one of the most thoroughly and ardently discussed topics at the meeting. France led the debate for the incorporation of traceability as a risk management tool in determining the status of food products

and whether they have been derived from biotechnology. France argued that such a broad risk management tool should be used in principle and on a CODEX-wide level, rather than just in relation to food derived from biotechnology.

This proactive involvement as well as France's contribution in the drafting of the discussion paper warrants full compliance with its Okinawa commitment to the Task Force's production of a substantial interim report.

Germany

Germany succeeded in sending delegates to the Second Session meeting and in providing feedback and commentary in the First Sessional Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology meeting in July 2000. This feedback helped to construct the agenda for the Second Session meeting in Chiba, furthering the goals of both the Task Force and CODEX itself.

Italy

Italy's participation in the meeting and events leading up to the meeting falls very much in line with that of Germany, Britain, and Canada, allotting it full compliance acknowledgement for its Okinawa commitment to the work of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology.

Japan

The Japanese hosted the March 2001 meeting of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Food Derived from Biotechnology meeting as a part of its mandate as the chair of the committee. The meeting's organization and subsequent success in producing a substantive interim report can be correlated to the efforts of the Japanese delegation. This delegation was extensive as it called upon the expertise of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Education, Sports, Culture, Science and Technology, the Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries, and the Ministry of Economy, Trade, and Industry.

Aside from its organizational and hosting duties, Japan also provided substantial comments in the discussion portion of the session's agenda, which indicates its full compliance with its Okinawa commitment to support the work of the Task Force.

Russia

Russia is the only G8 country that did not participate in the Ad Hoc Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology in Chiba. According to article 3 of the Statutes of the CODEX Alimentarius Commission, any member country or organization of CODEX is eligible to participate in the ad hoc meetings as observers. Russia was not listed as a participant in the Second Session of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology, nor did it provide feedback on the First Session of the Task Force, which led to the drafting of the agenda for the Second Session.

For these reasons, Russia earned a score in the negative range for failing to contribute to the Task Force's drafting of a substantial interim report.

United States

The United States, in addition to sending delegates to the Intergovernmental Task Force's Second Session and providing feedback, furthered its contribution by drafting *Conference Room Document 3: Comments Relating to the Discussion Paper on Traceability*. The U.S. thus led the dissenting debate against France, claiming that the very definition of traceability was ambiguous, making it difficult to establish it as a broad-level tool for risk management, if at all.

These proactive efforts and participation merit the U.S. a score of full compliance with their Okinawa commitment to advance further toward a substantial interim report on the road to the completion of the mandate of the Ad Hoc Intergovernmental Task Force on Foods Derived from Biotechnology in 2003.

Sources

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