Statements Of Principle Concerning The Role Of Science In The Codex Decision-Making Process And The Extent To Which Other Factors Are Taken Into Account

1. The food standards, guidelines and other recommendations of Codex Alimentarius shall be based on the principle of sound scientific analysis and evidence, involving a thorough review of all relevant information, in order that the standards assure the quality and safety of the food supply.
2. When elaborating and deciding upon food standards Codex Alimentarius will have regard, where appropriate, to other legitimate factors relevant for the health protection of consumers and for the promotion of fair practices in food trade.
3. In this regard it is noted that food labelling plays an important role in furthering both of these objectives.
4. When the situation arises that members of Codex agree on the necessary level of protection of public health but hold differing views about other considerations, members may abstain from acceptance of the relevant standard without necessarily preventing the decision by Codex.

Criteria for the Consideration of the Other Factors Referred to in the Second Statement of Principle

• when health and safety matters are concerned, the Statements of Principle Concerning the Role of Science and the Statements of Principle Relating to the Role of Food Safety Risk Assessment should be followed;
• other legitimate factors relevant for health protection and fair trade practices may be identified in the risk management process, and risk managers should indicate how these factors affect the selection of risk management options and the development of standards, guidelines and related texts;
• consideration of other factors should not affect the scientific basis of risk analysis; in this process, the separation between risk assessment and risk management should be respected, in order to ensure the scientific integrity of the risk assessment;
• it should be recognized that some legitimate concerns of governments when establishing their national legislation are not generally applicable or relevant world-wide;¹
• only those other factors which can be accepted on a world-wide basis, or on a regional basis in the case of regional standards and related texts, should be taken into account in the framework of Codex;
• the consideration of specific other factors in the development of risk management recommendations of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies should be clearly documented, including the rationale for their integration, on a case-by-case basis;
• the feasibility of risk management options due to the nature and particular constraints of the production or processing methods, transport and storage, especially in developing countries, may be considered; concerns related to economic interests and trade issues in general should be substantiated by quantifiable data;
• the integration of other legitimate factors in risk management should not create unjustified barriers to trade²; particular attention should be given to the impact on developing countries of the inclusion of such other factors.

(Taken from the Codex Alimentarius Commission Procedural Manual)

¹ Confusion should be avoided between justification of national measures under the SPS and TBT Agreements and their validity at the international level.
² According to the WTO principles, and taking into account the particular provisions of the SPS and TBT Agreements.