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CODEX APPROVES FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF CCNFSDU DRAFT GUIDELINE ON VITAMIN AND MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS

WASHINGTON, D.C., *June 30, 2004* – In a key decision that ratifies an agreement reached last November in Bonn, Germany, the United Nations’ food and dietary supplement standard-setting body, the Codex Alimentarius Commission, has approved further development of the Codex Committee on Nutrition and Foods for Special Dietary Uses’ (CCNFSDU) Draft Guideline on Vitamin and Mineral Supplements.

The issue of maximum contents for nutrients in dietary supplement products had been the most difficult issue in the guideline, but consensus was reached in 2003, after several years of intensive debate. During the same period, this topic has been the subject of major scientific progress by several national and regional scientific bodies.

The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN) took an active role in urging acceptance of the guideline by the commission. John Hathcock, vice president, scientific and international affairs, CRN, said at the end of the meeting in Geneva, Switzerland, “This topic is now ready for scientifically-based international harmonization in a manner that will protect consumers’ health and facilitate fair practices in food trade in a manner that is consistent with the World Trade Organization’s Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Agreement. This is a major victory not only for producers, but of the millions of consumers around the world.”

CRN and other dietary supplement industry organizations have long urged approval by the Codex Alimentarius Commission for promulgation of this important guideline.

Mark LeDoux, chairman of CRN's International Trade and Market Development Committee and CRN Board member, noted, "We in the industry have long maintained that maximum levels set by Codex or governments for contents of vitamins and minerals in supplements should be based solely and completely on safety, not on nutritional policy in general or the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) in particular. In agreeing to this standard's progress today, Codex has taken a giant step toward ensuring that consumers will have access to dietary supplements based on clear and fair, scientifically supportable criteria."

Codex Alimentarius, established under the joint supervision of the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and World Health Organization (WHO) in 1962, establishes standards that serve as models for regulation by the 170 member countries. Its decisions are used by the World Trade Organization in deciding disputes between member countries.

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Note to Editor: The Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), founded in 1973, is a Washington, D.C.-based trade association representing dietary supplement industry ingredient suppliers and manufacturers. CRN members adhere to a strong code of ethics, comply with dosage limits and manufacture dietary supplements to high quality standards under good manufacturing practices. For more information on CRN, visit <http://www.crnusa.org>