



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-sixth Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

27 November - 2 December 2023

REPORT BY THE CHAIRPERSON ON THE 84TH AND 85TH SESSIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE (INCLUDING MATTERS REFERRED)

(Prepared by the CCLAC Regional Coordinator, Member of the Executive Committee elected on a geographic basis by CCLAC and Costa Rica as its advisor)

Thank you for the preparation of the document with the following considerations:

Meeting modalities:

From 2020, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Codex restructured its meeting format, passing from exclusively in-person sessions to a combination of virtual and hybrid modes, effectively incorporating both modalities.

According to the reports presented by the Codex Secretary, the change from in-person to virtual mode witnessed an unprecedented increase in registrations. This format provides a broader opportunity for participation in meetings, having a larger number of both, members and observers, as well as facilitating larger delegations.

We agree that it is still necessary to work in order to ensure that virtual meetings are coherent and inclusive. It is crucial to maintain consistency of the meetings with the other fundamental Codex values, such as the creation of the consensus and promoting principal collaboration.

However, it is crucial to consider that achieving consensus on complex issues in virtual meetings involves different requisites compared to in-person meetings. To ensure a comprehensive analysis of the advantages and disadvantages that affect Member Countries regarding the different meeting modalities conducted to fulfil the work, an exhaustive examination is necessary.

With the aim to identify the preference of the Member Countries, as well as the participation level in the Committees done in the 2023. The Regional Coordinator of Latin America and The Caribbean, with the support of the Member Executive Committee, chosen according to geographical criteria of CCLAC and Costa Rica as its successor. It was done a national survey in October and November 2023.

The survey was answered by 22 Member Countries, which represents 66,6% of the region.

As a result, the principal cause that makes it difficult for the countries to participate in the presential meetings is the limited budget resources to confront the travel (tickets, hotel, visa, and others). The virtual mode is preferred in case the agenda theme of the committee meeting does not present an argument that demands negotiation difficulties.

The Member Countries of the region of Latin America and The Caribbean have received the support of international organizations to guarantee their participation in the in-person modality when in the country exists topics of discussion of interest. This mechanism has been of great ally for active participation.

Recommendation:

Is evident that the region of Latin America and The Caribbean has benefited from the different meeting modalities -virtual and hybrid- increasing their participation in the different Codex committees. Is because of that, that integrating official regulations for these modalities will be a great ally to obtain effective participation, as evidenced in the in-person meetings. Taking equity and transparency as the main pillars of Codex.