



JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

CODEx ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

Forty-sixth Session

FAO Headquarters, Rome, Italy

27 November - 2 December 2023

MATTERS ARISING FROM FAO AND WHO

(Prepared by the Regional Coordinator of Latin America and the Caribbean)

Ecuador thanks the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for preparing the document.

Ecuador, as the chair of the FAO/WHO Coordinating Committee for Latin America and the Caribbean (CCLAC), has held workshops, trainings, seminars, among others, physically and virtually, many of them with the support of the Codex parent's organizations (FAO and WHO), with the aim of keeping the Member Countries of the region at the forefront of information and activities carried out to encourage good participation in the different spaces of the Codex Alimentarius.

The main activities carried out in 2023 are described below:

- **Regional event on World Food Safety Day:** For the third consecutive year, the international and regional organizations CCLAC, FAO, the Pan American Fever Centre Foot and Mouth Disease and Veterinary Public Health of the Pan American Health Organization (PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO), the Regional International Organization for Agricultural Health (OIRSA) and the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation on Agriculture (IICA) came together to celebrate World Food Safety Day (WFD) and highlight the importance of food safety for better health.

To celebrate this day, two activities were carried out: a virtual seminar in which different experts from the region participated, as well as a digital drawing contest, both with the aim of promoting food safety to improve our health.

The event was held in virtual format on June 5th and 6th, 2023, with around 350 delegates participating.

- **Food Safety Risk Management – decisions based on scientific evidence:** PANAFTOSA/SPV-PAHO and the Codex Trust Fund (CTF) are conducting a series of regional training workshops, specifically designed to meet the needs and requirements of countries and the Codex. The workshops are part of the World Health Organization (WHO) activities to provide better scientific knowledge, technical tools and messages to Member States, industries and consumers. These workshops are aimed at Member States with different levels of advancement of their national Codex systems, including available capacity in risk management. The first series of workshops will focus on establishing maximum levels for chemical contaminants in food (MLs).

This workshop was designed to create an environment in which attendees can learn new skills and knowledge in a dynamic and engaging way, and also uses a combination of different training formats that include short lectures, debates, brainstorming, practical exercises, role plays and case studies.

In the workshop we had experts from the WHO Food Safety Standards and Scientific Advisory Unit from Geneva as speakers, who imparted knowledge of the following topics through presentations and practical exercises:

- Working principles for risk analysis for application within the framework of the Codex Alimentarius.
- Risk Assessment of Chemicals in Food: Hazard Identification and Characterization, Exposure Assessment and Risk Characterization – Introduction with examples.
- Chemical risk: definition of the problem, scope of risk assessment.
- Basic statistical concepts necessary for chemical risk assessment.
- Sampling strategies.
- Assessment of dietary exposure to chemicals: different approaches, data requirements, estimation of chronic and acute exposures, interpretation of exposure estimates and their limitations.
- LM establishment procedures, necessary data and used criteria.
- Tools for data collection and organization: surveys and monitoring of food contamination and consumption.
- Risk management options (case studies).

13 countries from the region participated: Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Uruguay.

The event was held in person, in Quito, Ecuador, from June 19th to 23th, 2023. Around 25 delegates participated per day.

- **Codex ABC regional training:** The Latin American and Caribbean Region (CCLAC), with the support of the Codex Secretariat and the IICA carried out the Codex ABC training.

The topics discussed were the bases of Codex, its importance in food safety, equitable food trade and the generation of regulations. The 8 steps for the construction of regulations and each of the factors that interfere in the process were reviewed.

A simulation of an Electronic Working Group (EWG) was carried out with the purpose of introducing new delegates to this topic, explaining how to add comments and the functions of each member when creating an EWG. Also, with the help of a Member Country, the operation of the Codex Online Commenting System (OCS) was explained.

There was a presentation from Costa Rica and Guyana, who shared the formation of their National Committees and their internal processes for the generation of information regarding Codex, being a great opportunity for the countries to visualize successful cases.

The main objective of the training was to reinforce the knowledge of the region's delegates, encouraging active participation in each of the Codex activities.

The event was held virtually with translation into Spanish, English and French, on August 31st until September 5th, 2023. More than 250 delegates participated each day.

- **Uncertainty in analytical measurement in Codex Alimentarius:** This seminar, which was held in virtual format was an opportunity to learn about the challenges and methods to address uncertainty in food measurement according to the standards established by the Codex Alimentarius, and to delve into a document of great relevance in the field of the measurement.

The event was aimed at personnel from government laboratories related to health, agriculture, environment and metrology institutes of the CCLAC Region. It was divided into two sessions, the first focused on general aspects of measurement uncertainty, providing a theoretical basis to understand the

importance of the topic. The second session was dedicated to delving into the content and applications of the Codex CXG 54-2004 document, providing attendees with a practical and updated guide for managing uncertainty in the laboratory setting.

Exhibitors from Chile, Germany and Uruguay collaborated.

The event was held on September, 12th and 13th, 2023. Around 800 delegates participated.

- **South-South Cooperation: Comparative visit to the Codex Contact Point of Ecuador:** Within the framework of the binational project of the CTF “Capacity development for the strengthening and effective management of the Codex Contact Point, the National Codex Commission and the National Codex Mirror Committees in Guatemala and El Salvador”, based on the principles of South-South Cooperation, a delegation from El Salvador and Guatemala visited Ecuador, in order to learn about the responsibilities and competencies of the National Codex Alimentarius Committee, its Contact Point and its technical subcommittees, in order to identify spaces for improvement in their national programs and processes. The event was held in person from September 18th until 22th, 2023. Around 15 delegates participated per day.
- **Commemoration of the 60th anniversary of the Codex Alimentarius:** Ecuador through its National Committee and with the desire to highlight the work carried out in the field of the Codex Alimentarius, has considered it of utmost importance to celebrate its sixtieth anniversary through a National Symposium, in which important actions in this matter will be highlighted. The event had the following objectives:
 - Generate an informative space to highlight the importance of the Codex Alimentarius, through the application of its standards, guidelines and codes of practice, emphasizing the importance of food safety.
 - Socialize interested parties about the objective pursued by the Codex Alimentarius, regarding the protection of consumer health and the application of equitable practices in the food trade.

The event was held in person on October 4th, 2023. Around 380 delegates participated.

- **Strengthening capacities in Codex topics for the Latin American and Caribbean region:** The Agency for Phyto and Zoosanitary Regulation and Control of Ecuador (AGROCALIDAD) as the chair of the CCLAC and the FAO Regional Office for Latin America and the Caribbean, join together under the project Actions to Support the Implementation of Codex texts for AMR (ACT) to offer a series of virtual seminars with the purpose of socializing and promoting the application of the Codex Alimentarius standards for strengthening the food safety system in the countries. The series of seminars is being broadcast between 2022 and 2025 throughout the CCLAC Region, in Spanish and English. To date, around 750 delegates have participated.

This year, 3 new modules were carried out in virtual format. On April, 28th, Module 3: Future challenges in food safety was addressed; On July, 7th, Module 4: Application of the Codex Alimentarius was taught; and, on November, 17th, we shared Module 5: One Health.

Thanks to the support of FAO, WHO, CTF, PANAFTOSA-PAHO/WHO, OIRSA and IICA attendance of more than 3,005 participants has been achieved in the different activities carried out in 2023, as part of the 7,600 participants that we have reached in the management of Ecuador as CCLAC Coordinator, so we thank all of them for their support.