

# CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION



Food and Agriculture  
Organization of  
the United Nations



World Health  
Organization

Viale delle Terme di Caracalla, 00153 Rome, Italy - Tel: (+39) 06 57051 - Fax: (+39) 06 5705 4593 - E-mail: [codex@fao.org](mailto:codex@fao.org) - [www.codexalimentarius.org](http://www.codexalimentarius.org)

**REP13/AFRICA**

## JOINT FAO/WHO FOOD STANDARDS PROGRAMME

### CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION

*Thirty-sixth Session*  
*Rome, Italy, 1 - 5 July 2013*

### REPORT OF THE TWENTIETH SESSION OF THE FAO/WHO COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR AFRICA

*Yaoundé, Cameroon, 29 January - 1 February 2013*

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Twentieth Session of the Codex Coordinating Committee for Africa reached the following conclusions:

### **MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION BY THE 36<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND BY THE 68<sup>TH</sup> SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE:**

#### The Coordinating Committee:

- agreed to consider the need for development of a regional standard for processed cheese (para. 11);
- agreed that there was justification for the establishment of a new Codex Committee for Spices, Aromatic Plants and their Formulations (para. 14);
- considered the Draft Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 and made a number of comments and suggestions (paras 19-33); and
- unanimously agreed that Cameroon should be re-appointed as Regional Coordinator for Africa (paras 70-79).

### **OTHER MATTERS**

#### The Coordinating Committee:

- expressed appreciation to FAO and WHO for their work in the area of capacity building and scientific advice (para. 42) and the support provided through the Codex Trust Fund (para. 49);
- expressed its support for the activities to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Codex (para. 18);
- exchanged information on national food control systems, use of Codex standards at national and regional level and nutritional issues in the region (paras 60-69);
- agreed to develop a new strategic plan for CCAFRICA (2014 – 2019) (paras 80-83);
- agreed to identify and rank products suitable for a Codex standard (regional or international) (paras 84-85); and
- agreed that the Coordinator, Cameroon, would prepare a revised proposal for Guidelines for the submission of candidatures from Africa for positions of responsibility at the Codex Alimentarius Commission and its subsidiary bodies (para. 87).

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## INTRODUCTION

1. The FAO/WHO Regional Coordinating Committee for Africa held its Twentieth Session in Yaoundé, from 29 January to 1 February 2013, by courtesy of the Government of the Republic of Cameroon. The Session was chaired by Mr Médi MOUNGUI, Deputy Permanent Representative to FAO, Embassy of the Republic of Cameroon. The Session was attended by 134 delegates and observers representing 35 Member Countries, 5 Observer Members from outside the region, and 5 international organizations. A complete list of participants is provided in Appendix I to this report.

## OPENING OF THE SESSION

2. Mr Boniface Charles Booto à Ngon, General Manager, Standards and Quality Agency, Cameroon, highlighted the role of the Coordinator for the Region and expressed appreciation to Ghana for their excellent work as Coordinator for Africa until 2011. He stressed the need to ensure effective participation of African countries in Codex and noted the capacity building activities carried out in this area in the region, especially the FAO TCP project to support the national Codex committees in Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic and CCAFRICA coordination in Cameroon, and the importance of regional cooperation and of economic integration in the perspective of sustainable development.

3. Mr Philémon Yang, Prime Minister, opened the session on behalf of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, His Excellency Paul Biya, and highlighted the decision of the African Union (AU) to establish a regional food safety authority and rapid alert system. He pointed out that a round table on issues related to food standards and food safety would be held in conjunction with the session, as part of the celebrations for the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Codex. Mr Yang recalled that agriculture was an essential component of development in Cameroon and also noted that standards would be necessary in order to ensure the safety of new technologies.

4. Mrs Maria Helena Semedo, Assistant Director-General, FAO Regional Representative for Africa, stressed that in the context of globalization, climate change and the evolution of food production systems, food security could be achieved for the poor and vulnerable populations through social protection mechanisms, potable water access and nutrition education for consumers, as well as adequate food safety policies. Mrs Semedo noted that Coordinating Committees represented an excellent opportunity for countries to address common issues and to establish a regional network to implement food safety policies, and reasserted the commitment of FAO to support member countries in the region, as reflected in the recent TCP involving Cameroon, Gabon and the Central African Republic.

## ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA (Agenda Item 1)<sup>1</sup>

5. The Committee agreed to consider the following items under Agenda Item 7 – Other Business
- The elaboration of regional standards in CCAFRICA.
  - Guidelines for the submission of candidatures from Africa for positions of responsibility at the CAC and its subsidiary bodies.
  - The proposal from the Observer from IFPRI to provide information on biofortification by conventional means.
6. It was agreed that the discussion paper on the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 would be considered in conjunction with Agenda Item 4(a). With these amendments, the Committee adopted the provisional agenda as its agenda for the session.

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<sup>1</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/1.

**MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND OTHER CODEX COMMITTEES (Agenda Item 2a))<sup>2</sup>****Proposed draft Standard on Processed Cheese**

7. The Committee recalled that the Commission had agreed to discontinue work on the development of a standard for processed cheese and following further discussion, had agreed to request Coordinating Committees to discuss the need for such a standard.

8. Some delegations did not support further work in this regard, taking into account the considerable efforts of the Committee on Milk and Milk Products to develop such a standard and noting that there was no real indication for a need for such a standard. It was further noted that if there were problems at regional level that consideration could be given to the development of a regional standard.

9. Some other delegations expressed support for such a standard, especially noting that there was wide trade in such products and that there were safety concerns that would need to be addressed.

10. It was clarified that safety concerns could be addressed through relevant horizontal standards and not necessarily through a single standard for processed cheese. It was further explained that the CAC had requested the Codex Secretariat to issue a Circular Letter to request members to identify gaps in the safety and quality provisions of Codex texts that would justify new work on processed cheese and describe the scope of any new work to be considered to address these gaps. The Committee was informed that the Circular Letter, CL 2012/24 CAC, was issued in August 2012 and that the due date for comments is 28 February 2013.

11. The Committee therefore agreed it would consider the need for development of a regional standard and to encourage members to reply to the CL so that the CAC could be provided with sufficient information to assist it in its decision.

**Proposal for establishment of a subsidiary body of the Codex Alimentarius Commission**

12. The Committee recalled that the Commission had considered a proposal from India for the establishment of a Committee on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations and had agreed to ask the Coordinating Committees for their views on this proposal.

13. The Delegation of India introduced the rationale for the proposal presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/2-Add.1: a large range of widely different national standards existed for spices and related products; the lack of harmonized standards could result in barriers to trade; and the main producers of spices were in developing countries. As regards the scope, the standards should cover different forms (whole and processed) and include only quality provisions as food safety aspects were covered by general committees; and reference would be made to relevant Codex texts. ISO standards covered only a limited range of spices specifications and more comprehensive work could be accomplished in an intergovernmental organisation, while taking into account current ISO standards. Although spices were of plant origin, they could not be considered by the two existing committees responsible for fruit and vegetables. The Delegation indicated that the wide range of products covered would not make it possible for a time limited task force to complete the work, and also outlined the mechanism and time schedule of the proposed committee.

14. The Committee thanked India for the presentation and agreed that there was justification for the establishment of a committee on spices, aromatic herbs and their formulations and supported it being hosted by India. The Committee however noted the concerns of some delegations that they might face difficulties in attending meetings in India and proposed that, should the committee be established, consideration should be given to co-hosting. The Committee noted the offer of Nigeria to co-host the Committee.

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<sup>2</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/2; CX/AFRICA 13/20/2-Add.1,CRD 1 (Comments of Kenya).

### **Fiftieth Anniversary of Codex**

15. Mrs Awilo Ochieng-Pernet, Codex Vice-chairperson and Chairperson of the 50<sup>th</sup> Codex Anniversary Organising Committee informed the Coordinating Committee about the preparations that are underway in view of the celebrations of the Codex Golden Jubilee and she also highlighted the fact that the Directors-General of FAO and WHO had confirmed their participation in the high-level opening ceremony of the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the CAC that will take place in Rome on 1 July 2013. She recalled some of the objectives for marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary, i.e., (1) to celebrate the key CAC achievements since its foundation; (2) to consider emerging issues and future challenges that Codex will be facing and to envisage how the CAC could address them; and (3) to increase awareness about Codex. Mrs Ochieng-Pernet stressed the fact that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the CAC was a unique opportunity for Codex Members to raise awareness amongst policy makers and other codex stakeholders about the importance of Codex food safety and quality work throughout 2013. While emphasizing that the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebrations should be owned by the entire Codex community, Mrs Ochieng-Pernet appealed to all Members of the CCAFRICA to initiate and/or participate in 50<sup>th</sup> Codex Anniversary activities at national and regional levels. She congratulated the Coordinator of CCAFRICA for organizing a Codex 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Round-table entitled “Food Standards and Food Safety Challenges and Stakes for Africa” during the CCAFRICA session.

16. The Committee strongly recommended that the Directors-General of FAO and WHO instruct their national representatives to actively create awareness among national authorities to commemorate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Codex.

17. The Codex Secretariat further informed the Committee on progress with regard to activities for the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and that there would be a specific visual identity developed for this purpose. The Committee was also informed that there was high-level support in both FAO and WHO for the activities to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; that regional officers of both organisations were aware of the activities; and that this information in turn would be filtered down to the FAO and WHO representatives at national level.

18. The Committee thanked the Vice-Chairperson of the Commission for the update and expressed its support to the activities to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Codex.

### **DRAFT CODEX STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2019 (Agenda Item 2b))<sup>3</sup>**

19. The Committee recalled the process followed in the development of the Draft Codex Strategic Plan 2014-2019 since its last session and the decisions of the 67<sup>th</sup> Executive Committee and 35<sup>th</sup> Commission (2012) concerning further steps. Coordinating Committees had been invited to focus on the work plan and the activities presented in the revised draft prepared by the Sub-Committee established by the CCEXEC.

20. Dr Samuel Godefroy, Vice-Chairperson of the Commission and Chairperson of the CCEXEC Sub-Committee, recalled that a compilation of comments, including how the comments were addressed in preparing the revision, was provided in CX/AFRICA 13/20/3-Add.1, and highlighted the main aspects of the revised text. In view of the agreement reached by the Executive Committee, minimal changes had been made to the Introduction, Strategic Vision, Core Values, Strategic Goals and Objectives. In order to address a number of comments related to factors influencing Codex work, a new section on “Drivers for Change” was inserted, and the revision was focused on the Strategic Goals, activities and indicators which had not been previously discussed by the CCEXEC. The Vice-Chairperson therefore invited delegations to comment on these latter aspects in order to provide guidance to the Sub-Committee, taking into account that the text was not final and that some adjustments would be needed on the indicators and responsible parties.

21. The Committee expressed its thanks to Dr Godefroy and to the Sub-Committee for the excellent progress achieved in the development of the new Strategic Plan.

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CX/AFRICA 13/20/3, CX/AFRICA 13/20/3-Add.1.

### **General comments**

22. Some delegations pointed out that prior to the development of the new Strategic Plan, an evaluation of the achievements of the current Plan should be conducted and in particular, how the various activities had been carried out at the regional level for aspects relating to capacity building, which were especially important for the African Region. It was also proposed that the relevance of the current objectives and activities should be carefully considered before deciding which elements should be retained, deleted or added in view of the lessons learnt in the implementation process. Some delegations expressed the view that there should be continuity between the current and future Strategic Plans and that several current objectives and activities were adequate and should be retained.

23. The Committee recalled that the implementation of the current Strategic Plan was a standing item on the agendas of the CCEXEC and the Commission and that compliance with the indicators for each objective were regularly reviewed.

24. The Committee agreed that consideration of the lessons learnt in the implementation of the current Strategic Plan, including any gaps, should be taken into account in further development of the document by the CCEXEC Sub-Committee.

### **Drivers for change**

25. The Committee noted some concerns with the wording of the section on “Drivers for Change”, which could be interpreted as allowing consideration of other aspects such as fair trade in relation to labour conditions or gender issues. It was however recalled that all elements in the Strategic Plan should remain in the framework of the Codex mandate and the Committee agreed to retain the current text.

### **Strategic Goal 1: Establish international food standards that address current and emerging food issues**

26. Following a proposal to refer specifically to nutrition in the title of Goal1, it was recalled that “food issues” include nutrition and all areas covered by the Codex mandate, and that as agreed in previous discussions the objectives should be concise, with the understanding that all objectives and activities were considered in the framework of the Codex mandate. It was proposed to specify the timeline for completing standards under Objective 1.1 as the term “in a timely manner” but the current text was retained as it was noted that efficient work management was specifically addressed under Goal 4.

### **Strategic Goal 2: Ensure the application of risk analysis principles in the development of Codex standards**

27. Under Objective 2.3: Increase scientific input from developing countries, some delegations pointed out that the obstacles to developing country input were not clearly defined, whether this related to the lack of expertise, infrastructure, and lack of participation or data submission. The Representative of FAO clarified that the main issue on which capacity building was required was data generation. The Committee stressed the importance of Objective 2.3.3 on ensuring participation of experts from developing countries in the work of Codex.

### **Strategic Goal 3: Facilitate the effective participation of all Codex Members**

28. In Activity 3.1.2, the Committee noted a proposal to refer to hosting rather than co-hosting but it was noted that the official terminology referred to host countries for permanent arrangements while co-hosting was encouraged for the purposes of capacity building.

29. As regards Activities 3.1.3 and 3.1.4 it was recalled that the Trust Fund would still be in operation during the period covered by the Strategic Plan, which explained the reference to its funding in Activity 3.1.4, while planning for a successor initiative was addressed by Activity 3.1.3, and it was agreed that the sequence of the activities may be reconsidered.

30. The Committee agreed that the Trust Fund should not be discontinued abruptly and that careful consideration should be given to the next steps for a successor initiative.

**Strategic Goal 4: Implement effective and efficient work management systems and practices**

31. The Committee recalled that this Goal was intended to improve working procedures. Some delegations expressed the view that it was not clear how the region could contribute to this objective, what was the purpose of these activities and how activity 4.1.1 in particular would be implemented. The Committee did not make any specific recommendation at this stage and noted that the complexity of the subject would require further consideration by countries in the region.

32. One delegation expressed the view that 4.1.4 on the distribution of documents was not necessary as a specific activity since this aspect required a few adjustments but was generally satisfactory. The Committee however agreed to retain it as it had been regularly put forward in earlier discussions.

33. The Vice-Chairperson thanked the Committee for its contribution and indicated that the CCEXEC Sub-Committee would organize a physical meeting to revise the Strategic Plan based on the input received from the Coordinating Committees, and that the resulting document would be considered by the 36<sup>th</sup> Commission, through the 68<sup>th</sup> CCEXEC.

**ACTIVITIES OF FAO AND WHO COMPLEMENTARY TO THE WORK OF THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION (Agenda Item 3a)<sup>4</sup>**

34. The Representative of FAO introduced documents CX/AFRICA/13/20/4, CX/AFRICA/13/20/4 Add 1 and CRD 6 on Codex related capacity building activities performed by FAO.

35. In particular the attention of delegates was drawn to the risk-based imported food control activities having been performed in Africa that paved the way for the new FAO guidance on this issue. The new work on the multicriteria decision analysis approach applied to food control policy and decision-making was introduced.

36. The priorities of work for the region in the coming biennium were also highlighted, among which, support to national and regional legislative and regulatory frameworks for food safety; support to national Codex processes; risk based food control programmes (including food inspection and import control); and emergency preparedness plans support to food safety management along value chains and consumers education. Data collection as basis for sound food safety policies and control programmes also need to be further enhanced.

37. The Representative informed the Committee that the WHO has been partnering with member states in the African region in a number of key programme areas aimed at enhancing capacity for Food safety and nutrition as well as with a number of organisations in the region to strengthen capacities and harmonize indicators for nutrition surveillance. The Representative drew the attention of the meeting to the activities carried out by WHO in the region, amongst others, the integration of nutrition and food safety indicators into infectious diseases surveillance and response programmes; the Global Foodborne Infections Network (GFN) Workshops; and support to countries in the implementation of norms, standards and guidelines and strategies to improve infant feeding especially in children with mothers living with HIV/AIDS.

38. The Observer of the African Union informed the Committee that following the recommendations of African Codex Contacts Points and the CCAFRICA, the African Union – Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) supports the effective participation of African delegates to eight prioritized Codex committees. The Observer explained that AU organizes annual meetings of Codex Contact Points; supports physical meetings of African experts (four experts) to prepare scientific arguments on proposed Codex standards which are submitted to Codex Contact Points through the Coordinator for Africa for reference during the national consultations before the submission of their comments or positions to the Codex Secretariat; and participation of two experts in these eight Codex committee sessions.

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<sup>4</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/4; CX/AFRICA 13/20/4-Add.1, CRD 6 (Summary report of the FAO/WHO Pre-CCAFRICA Workshop).



39. The Observer further informed the Committee that the African Union Commission (AUC), through AU-IBAR, convened the First Continental Workshop to discuss the mechanisms and procedures for putting in place a system for ensuring the safety and quality of food produced and traded on the African continent. The Workshop also considered the importance of establishing a system for alerting all AU Member States of any ensuing food safety concerns.

40. The Workshop concluded and recommended that there is a need to urgently consider and adopt the establishment of an AU Food Safety Management Coordination Mechanism (AU-FSMCM) incorporating an Africa-wide Rapid Food and Feed Alert Mechanism (ARFFAM), in the lines of the AU-IBAR and Inter-African Phytosanitary Council (AU/IAPSC).

41. A follow-up workshop is planned for March 2013 in order to agree on the missions, functions and structure of African Union Food Safety Authority and a Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed at the African Union Commission.

42. The Committee expressed its appreciation to FAO, WHO and the AU-IBAR for their support in building capacity in the region.

**FAO/WHO PROJECT AND TRUST FUND FOR ENHANCED PARTICIPATION IN CODEX (Agenda Item 3b))<sup>5</sup>**

43. The Representative of WHO introduced document CX/AFRICA 13/20/5 containing the Codex Trust Fund Annual Report 2011, the 16<sup>th</sup> Progress Report including the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, First Transitional Monitoring Report, and CAC/35/INF/10.

44. In these documents delegates' attention was called to:

- The creation of the new Group 4 aimed at providing additional support to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States who had completed their normal course of support from the Codex Trust Fund.
- The work that had been done to develop a Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and to use this to provide annual monitoring reports to Codex Member States.
- The full list of Codex training activities supported by the Codex Trust Fund in 2011 and planned for 2012 at the time of writing. The Representative called attention to the pre-CCAFRICA workshop, which was organized by FAO and WHO immediately preceding CCAFRICA on "National Food Control Systems". Forty-nine participants had been supported by the Trust Fund to participate in the workshop and to stay on for CCAFRICA. Further information on the workshop was available in CRD 6. The Committee was informed that information on all FAO and WHO workshops to be supported by the CTF in 2013 would be made available to Codex Members at the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission.
- The promising results and learning that were gained from the pilot project to enhance participation in the early development of Codex texts and promote exchange among more experienced and less experienced countries. Participants from African countries had been involved in this initiative. Full information was available in CAC/35/INF/10.

45. The Representative concluded by saying that WHO, FAO and the Codex Trust Fund would be pleased to receive any comments that members of the Committee would like to make on the documents before them, or any other issues regarding the Codex Trust Fund.

46. One delegation highlighted that it would be important to assess the impact of the Codex Trust Fund. The delegation also highlighted that one Codex Trust Fund donor country was contributing USD10 000 per year to the CTF and called on member states of the African region to consider making a contribution to the Trust Fund.

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<sup>5</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/5; CRD 6 (Summary report of the FAO/WHO Pre-CCAFRICA Workshop).

47. The Representative of WHO responded by calling attention to the assessment of outcomes that was being monitored in the Codex Trust Fund monitoring report. She also informed the committee that an assessment of impact of Codex Trust Fund activities would be an important component of the end of project evaluation that should take place in 2014.

48. The Representative further thanked the delegation for highlighting the importance of developing country contributions to the Trust Fund. Such a contribution from the African region would send a very strong message to Codex member states in other regions.

49. The Committee thanked the FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund for all the support provided since its inception and welcomed the inclusion of many countries of the region in Group 4 which gave two years extra support to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States. The Committee was looking forward to further developments and results from the Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and to discussions in 2015 on a possible successor initiative to the Codex Trust Fund.

#### **STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STRATEGIC PLAN FOR THE CCAFRICA (Agenda Item 4a))<sup>6</sup>**

50. The Committee recalled that previous sessions of the Committee had agreed on a number of priority activities for the implementation of the strategic plan.

51. The Delegation of Cameroon as coordinator introduced the report of the status of implementation of the strategic plan as presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/6, and noted that the Strategic Plan 2008 – 2013 focused primarily on communication between CCAFRICA members and other Codex bodies, on active and effective participation of the African continent in Codex work, and on cooperation for participation in Codex work; and the use of Codex outputs to improve food safety in Africa.

52. The Delegation highlighted those activities that had been:

- Effectively implemented: (i) the activities undertaken to improve active and effective participation of all countries in Codex; (ii) promotion and strengthening of NCCs and CCPs; (iii) use of technical and scientific expertise of member countries of the region; (iv) continuity and sustainability of CCAFRICA activities; and (v) technical cooperation;
- Those that were ongoing (activities related to communication); and
- Those that had not been accomplished (effective and active participation of all countries of the region; use of available scientific and technical expertise; identification and prioritization of regional needs in matters of food safety, e.g. regional standards).

53. It was noted that from a global perspective, implementation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan had established an active and effective presence of Africa in the work of Codex, while several challenges remain.

54. Delegations expressed their appreciation to the Delegation of Cameroon for the report and further expressed their satisfaction with progress on the implementation of the Strategic Plan, however several concerns or issues were highlighted:

- The approach taken for the current TCP covering 3 Central African Countries (see activity 3.1, CX/AFRICA 13/20/6) to be extended to other countries in the region;
- Need for more sensitization at the highest level of the importance of Codex to consumer health protection and trade; and the possibility of engaging the regional economic communities (RECs) and the AU to achieve this. It was noted that with the AU as an observer within CCAFRICA, it would be useful for the AU Commission to highlight issues related to food safety and Codex at the council of ministers and it would be useful for the AU to facilitate participation of the coordinator in such meetings. It was further

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<sup>6</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/6; CX/AFRICA 13/20/6-Add.1 (replies from Botswana, Central African Republic, Morocco and Zimbabwe), CRD 3 (reply from Mali), CRD 4 (reply from Uganda), CRD 5 (reply from Ghana), CRD 7 (reply from Nigeria).

noted that the proposed Food Safety Authority for Africa could improve coordination and help to establish a risk assessment body;

- Poor communication, in particular the fact that a well developed and functioning website was no longer active; that information was not received by Contact Points; and the availability of documents in official languages of the region other than English. Proposals were made to find a more permanent host for the CCAFRICA website either through the FAO or WHO regional offices or AU-IBAR since problems would always arise when a new coordinator was appointed.

55. It was clarified that efforts were made by AU-IBAR and the coordinator to ensure that all documents are made available in both English and French and to make them available to all contact points; and that efforts were ongoing to solve the technical problems related to the website. The Committee noted the continued willingness of AU-IBAR to host the CCAFRICA website on a more permanent basis.

56. In relation to engaging of RECs in Codex work, the Representative of FAO underlined that FAO was keen on working with RECs and their members to bring regional focus and dimension on Codex discussions. Not all RECs were equally engaged so far and it was a priority for FAO to increase this collaboration.

57. The Chairperson further clarified that the TCP project was a pilot project whose approach would need to be scaled up in future. Discussions were ongoing with the FAO regional representative and AU-IBAR to find ways to extend this type of support to other countries in the central African region as well as other regions of Africa.

58. The Chairperson concluded that the Committee welcomed the activities as presented by Cameroon and was appreciative of the work and all activities either completed or ongoing. He also concluded that further capacity building and participation in Codex should be pursued and in this regard welcomed the partnerships with FAO, WHO, AU-IBAR, the US Codex Office, EU and other parties; awareness should be raised at the highest level to increase the profile of Codex and noted the establishment of the African Food Safety Authority; and that in relation to communication, specific attention needs to be paid to get the website for CCAFRICA fully operational.

59. The Committee encouraged AU-IBAR and the coordinator to ensure that documents were made available in English and French to all contact points.

#### **INFORMATION ON NATIONAL FOOD CONTROL SYSTEMS, CONSUMER PARTICIPATION, USE OF CODEX STANDARDS AND PARTICIPATION IN CODEX AND IN FAO/WHO ACTIVITIES ON SCIENTIFIC ADVICE (Agenda Item 4b))<sup>7</sup>**

60. The Committee was informed of the updates in food control systems, consumer participation, use of Codex standards, participation in Codex work and the work of FAO/WHO activities on scientific advice.

#### **Food Control Systems**

61. The Committee noted that several initiatives were underway in several countries to improve on their food control systems. These include (i) updating and developing of national legislation; (ii) reorganization of the food control system, or establishment and improvement of coordination through the establishment of national food safety committees or SPS committees; and (iii) improvement of inspection services. It was noted that several of these initiatives were undertaken with support from FAO, AU-IBAR, EU and USA, amongst others. It was, however, noted that for legislation to be effective, human and other resources were necessary and that capacity building needed to be continued. A challenge remained in creating awareness among policy makers. It was further noted that there was a need to develop expertise in the field of risk assessments. In addition, laboratory

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<sup>7</sup> CL 2012/26-AFRICA, CX/AFRICA 13/20/7 (comments of Central African Republic, Mauritius and Zimbabwe), CRD 3 (comments of Mali), CRD 4 (comments of Uganda), CRD 5 (comments of Ghana), CRD 8 (comments of South Africa).

infrastructure needed to be improved and a proposal was made to consider partnerships at regional level in this regard and to put in place regional reference laboratories.

### **Participation in Codex and update of Codex standards**

62. The Committee noted the improved and effective participation in Codex work by members of the region. Some delegations highlighted the fact that they were also actively contributing to the work of Codex by leading electronic Working Groups or by being members of Working Groups. It was also noted that some countries in the region had actively participated in the mentoring project, funded by the CTF, for the development of the Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Application of Microbiological Criteria Related to Foods.

63. The Committee further noted that many countries in the region were harmonizing their standards with those of Codex.

### **FAO/WHO Scientific Advice**

64. The Representative of FAO having taken into account some of the written replies concerning participation of experts in FAO/WHO scientific advice clarified the mechanisms for experts to participate in scientific advice bodies. It was noted that while participation is on the basis of competencies, this is also strongly linked to the availability of data.

### **Conclusion**

65. The Committee noted the information provided and welcomed the progress made. The Committee further noted that much of the discussion on this item overlapped with that of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan (Agenda Item 4a) and that consideration should be given to consider this item together with the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan or to integrate this into the new Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA. A delegation pointed out this item was very important to assess progress and should be retained as a separate item, but could be structured differently. It was agreed to discuss this matter further at the next session.

### **NUTRITION ISSUES AT NATIONAL OR REGIONAL LEVEL (Agenda Item 5)<sup>8</sup>**

66. The Representative of FAO, referring to the information provided in the CX/AFRICA 13/20/4 Add.1, drew the attention of the Committee to the International Conference on Nutrition (ICN+21) to be held in November 2013; the Food Safety and Nutrition Awareness Campaign launched by the Regional Office for Africa (RAF); a project on complementary foods in Malawi; and Supporting Food Security, Nutrition and Livelihoods in Sub-Saharan Africa.

67. Mrs Awilo Ochieng-Pernet, Vice-Chairperson of the Commission, encouraged delegates to take the opportunity of regional events in the area of nutrition to promote awareness about Codex in the perspective of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Codex.

68. One delegation pointed out that a sub-regional meeting for West African countries would be held in the framework of the SUN (Scaling Up Nutrition) movement, in which only a few countries in the subregion were participating and stressed the importance of participation in such initiatives for countries in the region.

69. The Committee noted with appreciation the activities carried out at the national and regional level and encouraged countries in the region to participate in the SUN movement and all nutrition related regional initiatives, and to take this opportunity to promote awareness of Codex work.

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<sup>8</sup> CL 2012/26-AFRICA, CX/AFRICA 13/20/8 (comments of Central African Republic, Mauritius and Zimbabwe), CRD 1 (comments of Kenya), CRD 8 (comments of South Africa), CRD 2 (comments of Benin), CRD 3 (comments of Mali), CRD 4 (comments of Uganda).

**NOMINATION OF THE COORDINATOR (Agenda Item 6)<sup>9</sup>**

70. The Delegation of Cote d'Ivoire, supported by many delegations, proposed to nominate Cameroon as Coordinator for a second term and expressed their appreciation for their achievements during the first term.

71. Several delegations, while agreeing with this proposal, referred to the discussion held under Agenda Item 4a on the implementation of the Strategic Plan for CCAFRICA. These delegations noted that some aspects of the coordination would require improvements, especially as regards communication, the website, clarification of the roles of the coordinator and the chair of the Committee, representation of the coordinator in other meetings in order to ensure visibility at the regional and international level, in particular to ensure the high profile of Codex and food safety issues in the region.

72. The Chairperson recalled that as specified in the Procedural Manual (Rule IV Coordinators of the Rules of Procedure of the Codex Alimentarius Commission), the Coordinator is a member country and that internal arrangements for practical implementation of the coordination are determined at country level.

73. Some delegations expressed their appreciation to Cameroon for carrying out coordination meetings of African countries in several Codex Committees.

74. Other delegations expressed the view that substantial improvement was required in the coordination, including in the framework of the Strategic plan, as regards exchange of views on Codex issues and coordination of positions and in the organisation of the session. They proposed that the issues identified should be openly discussed, with the cooperation and support of all countries in the region in order to ensure that the region as a whole could benefit from improved processes.

75. The Delegation of Kenya expressed interest in the position of Coordinator after Cameroon completed its second term at the 21<sup>st</sup> Session of CCAFRICA.

76. The Committee noted the offer of Nigeria to provide assistance and the possible co-hosting of the CCAFRICA with Cameroon.

77. The Delegation of Mauritania requested that consideration be given to grant countries that have never had the opportunity to be coordinator, the opportunity to be coordinator for Africa.

78. The Delegation of Cameroon expressed its appreciation to all delegations for their trust and cooperation and assured the Committee that they would make all efforts to address the concerns expressed at the session, as regards the coordination as a whole and the organisation of the session. For this purpose, Cameroon relied on the cooperation and assistance of countries in the region in order to ensure a successful mandate and future session of CCAFRICA.

79. The Committee agreed to recommend to the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission that Cameroon be appointed as Coordinator for Africa for a second term.

**DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE CCAFRICA STRATEGIC PLAN 2014 - 2019 (Agenda Item 7a)<sup>10</sup>**

80. The Delegation of Cameroon in introducing the discussion paper stated that a debate on the future strategic plan was necessary. The Delegation further noted that the evaluation of the current Strategic Plan revealed that many actions were still ongoing or warranted further funding or support to ensure their implementation. A new strategic plan would also need to address activities that had not received much attention, such as risk assessment, data generation and scientific advice, and the drafting of regional standards, in addition to other concerns related to improvement of food safety in the region.

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<sup>9</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/9.

<sup>10</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/10.

81. The Delegation proposed that an electronic Working Group be established to draft a CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 with the terms of reference as outlined in the discussion document.

82. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic Working Group led by Cameroon and Kenya, working in English and French with the following terms of reference:

- Identify the primary objectives of the new strategic plan, in the light of the vision and objectives of the Codex Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019, Africa's current concerns about food standards and food safety, and the conclusions of the evaluation of the CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2007 – 2013.
- Develop a draft CCAFRICA Strategic Plan 2014 – 2019 for further discussion by CCAFRICA.

83. The Committee noted that the meeting of contact points coordinated by AU-IBAR could be an opportunity for informal discussion of the proposed draft Strategic Plan by members of the region.

#### **DISCUSSION PAPER ON THE ELABORATION OF REGIONAL STANDARDS IN AFRICA (Agenda Item 7b))<sup>11</sup>**

84. The Delegation of Cameroon introduced the discussion paper as presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/11 and highlighted the fact that there were many food products produced in Africa that were likely to be traded intra-regionally or internationally and for which regional or international standards could be developed. The Delegation proposed the establishment of a Working Group to identify products from the region suitable for a Codex international or regional standard and to rank the identified products in order of priority.

85. The Committee agreed to establish an electronic Working Group led by Botswana and Cote d'Ivoire and working in English and French to identify and rank regional products suitable for a Codex standard (regional or international) for discussion at the next session of the Committee.

#### **GUIDELINES FOR THE SUBMISSION OF CANDIDATURES FROM AFRICA FOR POSITIONS OF RESPONSIBILITY AT THE CODEX ALIMENTARIUS COMMISSION AND ITS SUBSIDIARY BODIES (Agenda Item 7c))<sup>12</sup>**

86. The Delegation of Cameroon introduced the discussion paper as presented in CX/AFRICA 13/20/12 and noted that the document had been developed in response to a request from members of the region in view of the difficulties noted for candidatures of African countries to the various positions of responsibility at the Codex Alimentarius Commission.

87. Due to time constraints, the Committee did not discuss the proposed Guidelines. The Committee agreed that the Codex Secretariat would request comments on the proposed Guidelines through a Circular Letter. It was further agreed that the proposed Guidelines would also be discussed by the coordination meeting of CCPs of the region in the margins of the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission in July 2013. The Delegation of Cameroon would prepare a revised proposal taking into account all comments received for presentation to the next session of the Committee.

#### **BIOFORTIFICATION BY CONVENTIONAL BREEDING (Agenda Item 7d))**

88. The Coordinating Committee noted the information provided by the Observer from IFPRI on biofortification by conventional breeding. The Observer mentioned that there is no Codex standard on biofortification by conventional breeding and noted that this gap creates difficulty in some aspects of work involving biofortification. The Committee was informed that a discussion paper on this matter would be considered at both the 40<sup>th</sup> Session of CCFL (14 – 17 May 2013) and the 35<sup>th</sup> Session of CCNFSU (4 – 8 November 2013).

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<sup>11</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/11.

<sup>12</sup> CX/AFRICA 13/20/12, CRD 7 (comments of Nigeria).

**DATE AND PLACE OF NEXT SESSION (Agenda Item 8)**

89. The Coordinating Committee was informed that its 21<sup>st</sup> Session would be held in approximately two years time (2015) and that the exact date and venue would be communicated to Members at a later stage on the basis of consultation between the Coordinator to be appointed by the 36<sup>th</sup> Session of the Codex Alimentarius Commission and the Codex Secretariat.

## APPENDIX I

**LIST OF PARTICIPANTS**  
**LISTE DES PARTICIPANTS**

**Chairperson :** Mr Médi MOUNGUI  
**Président** Deuxième Conseiller  
Représentant permanent adjoint auprès de la  
FAO  
Ambassade de la République du Cameroun  
Via Siracusa, 4-6  
00161, Rome  
Italie  
Phone: +39 06 4403544  
Fax: +39 06 4403644  
Email : [medimoungui@yahoo.fr](mailto:medimoungui@yahoo.fr)

**ANGOLA**

Mrs SILVA Teodora  
Director General/Vice President Codex National  
IANORQ-Instituto Angolano normalização  
Qualidade; Codex – Angola  
Rua Cerqueira Lukoki n° 25  
Luanda - C.P 594  
Phone: 244927308077  
Email: [Tlourenosilva@gmail.com](mailto:Tlourenosilva@gmail.com)

**BENIN**

Mr HOUGBENOU HOUNGLA Egnon Jacques  
Animateur du Secrétariat Permanent du Comité  
National du Codex Alimentarius  
Direction de l'Alimentation et de la Nutrition  
Appliquée du Ministère de l'Agriculture, de  
l'Elevage et de la Pêche  
BP 295  
Porto-Novo  
Phone : +22993051186  
Email : [maepdana@gmail.com](mailto:maepdana@gmail.com)  
[jacques75@yahoo.fr](mailto:jacques75@yahoo.fr)

Dr DANSI Sénégbédo Germain  
Cadre de la Surveillance Sanitaire des Frontières  
Ports et Aéroports  
Direction Nationale de la Santé Publique Ministère  
de la Santé  
04BP1070 Cadjèhoun  
Cotonou  
Phone: +229 95068343  
Email: [ds.germano40@yahoo.fr](mailto:ds.germano40@yahoo.fr)

**BOTSWANA**

Dr SEIPONE Khumo  
Director of Health Services  
Ministry of Health  
Private Bag 0038  
Gaborone  
Phone: +267 3632522  
Fax: + 267 391055  
Email: [kseipone@gov.bw](mailto:kseipone@gov.bw) [kseipone@yahoo.com](mailto:kseipone@yahoo.com)

Dr BAIPOLEDI Kekgonne Edinton  
Deputy Director  
Department of Veterinary Services  
Ministry of Agriculture  
Private Bag 0032  
Gaborone  
Phone: +267 368 9500  
Fax: +267 390 3744  
Email: [kbaipoledi@gov.bw](mailto:kbaipoledi@gov.bw)

Mr TARIMO Hussein  
Principal Scientific Officer  
Ministry of Health  
Public Health Department  
Private Bag 00269  
Gaborone  
Phone: +267 363 2121  
Email: [htarimo@gov.bw](mailto:htarimo@gov.bw)  
[hhtarimo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:hhtarimo@yahoo.co.uk)

**BURKINA FASO**

Mr OUATTARA Moussa  
Agronome  
Point Focal Codex  
Ministère de l'agriculture et de la sécurité  
alimentaire  
DPV 01 BP: 5362 Ouagadougou 01  
Ouagadougou  
Phone: + 226 71353315



Email: [ouatmouss@yahoo.fr](mailto:ouatmouss@yahoo.fr)

Mr KOUDOUGOU Karim  
 Directeur du Contrôle des Aliments  
 et de la Nutrition Appliquée  
 Laboratoire National de santé Publique (LNSP)  
 BP 24 Ouagadougou 09  
 Ouagadougou  
 Phone: +226 788 372 99  
 Email: [krmkdg@yahoo.fr](mailto:krmkdg@yahoo.fr)

## BURUNDI

Mr MIVUBA Zacharie  
 Head Certification  
 Burundi Bureau of Standards  
 P.O. Box 3535  
 Bujumbura  
 Phone: +275 76 253 264  
 E-mail: [zachariemivuba2000@yahoo.fr](mailto:zachariemivuba2000@yahoo.fr)

## CAMEROON/CAMEROUN

Mr POUEDOGO  
 Department of Industry and Commerce  
 Prime Ministry's Office  
 NCC Member  
 BP 12876  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone: +233 99897733  
 Email: [pouedo@gmail.com](mailto:pouedo@gmail.com)

Dr ESSOMBA Jacques Armand  
 Deputy Director  
 Standards And Quality Agency (ANOR)  
 B.P 14966  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone : +237 94 92 50 55  
 Email: [essombajacquesarmand@yahoo.fr](mailto:essombajacquesarmand@yahoo.fr)

Mr EBAI TAKANG Stephen  
 Sub-Director / Member of Task Force  
 MINADER  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone: + 237 77 48 21 12  
 Email: [ebaits@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ebaits@yahoo.co.uk)

Mr MINDJOS MOMENY Martin Paul  
 Chef de Division de la Normalisation et  
 de la Qualité  
 Ministère des mines, de l'Industrie et  
 du Développement Technologique  
 Coordonateur du Secrétariat  
 Technique du CNCOSAC/CCAFRICA  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone : +237 70 75 91 29  
 Email: [mindjos@yahoo.fr](mailto:mindjos@yahoo.fr)

Mme BOOTO à NGON,  
 née WOLIMOUM Colette  
 Sous Directeur de l'Alimentation Animale  
 Ministère de l'Elevage, des Pêches et  
 des Industries Animales  
 CNCOSAC/CCAFRICA  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone : +237 99 61 24 71  
 Email: [booto25@yahoo.fr](mailto:booto25@yahoo.fr)

Mr KANGUE KOUM Henri  
 Chef de Bureau des Normes et du Contrôle  
 Alimentaire  
 Ministère de la Santé Publique  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone : +237 77 32 82 01  
 Email : [henrykangue@yahoo.fr](mailto:henrykangue@yahoo.fr)

Dr GIMOU Marie Madelène  
 Head of Laboratory Centre Pasteur du Cameroon  
 Centre Pasteur of Cameroon  
 P.B 1274  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone: +237 99 61 90 31  
 Fax: +237 22 23 15 64  
 Email: [gimou@pasteur-yaounde](mailto:gimou@pasteur-yaounde)

Ms NDJOU DJIO SOKAM Laure  
 Représentante Syndustriam  
 B.P 2622  
 Douala  
 Phone : +237 77 11 62 42  
 Email: [laure.ndjoudjiosukam@cm-nestle.com](mailto:laure.ndjoudjiosukam@cm-nestle.com)

Mrs AMOUGOU Marie-Delaventure  
 Representant Regional Centre, Sud, Est  
 Groupement Interpatronal du Cameroun  
 B.P :1134  
 Yaoundé  
 Phone : +237 99 92 41 43  
 Fax +237 22 23 12 26  
 Email: [mmessomolle@gicam.org](mailto:mmessomolle@gicam.org)

Ms MAHAMAT Ache  
 Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement  
 Rural / DEPC  
 Phone : +237 99069334  
 Email : [ache\\_mahamat@yahoo.fr](mailto:ache_mahamat@yahoo.fr)

Mr TATAH Solomon  
 Sub Director  
 Ministry of External Relations  
 B.P 30726 Yaoundé  
 Phone /Fax: +237 75 52 04 59 / 22 20 11 33  
 Email: [tatah-enoma@live.com](mailto:tatah-enoma@live.com)

Mr AWE Pierre  
 Cadre  
 Ministère de l'Eau et de l'Energie  
 B.P 70  
 Yaoundé

Phone: + 237 75 57 05 71  
Email : [pierreawe@yahoo.fr](mailto:pierreawe@yahoo.fr)

Mr FORGHAB Patrick MBOMBA  
Sub-Director of Environmental Economics  
Member of the Task Force and  
Sustainable Development  
Ministry of Environment Protection of Nature  
P.O. Box 320  
Yaoundé  
Phone /Fax : +237 77 61 53 43 / +237 22 22 11 06  
Email: [forghabp@yahoo.com](mailto:forghabp@yahoo.com) /  
[forghabp@gmail.com](mailto:forghabp@gmail.com)

Dr NGANDJIO Antoinette  
Chef de service d'hygiène et Environnement  
sections Microbiologie  
Centre Pasteur du Cameroun  
B.P 1274  
Yaoundé  
Phone /Fax : +237 99 86 73 21/ + 237 22 23 15 64  
Email : [ngandjioe@pasteur-yaounde.org](mailto:ngandjioe@pasteur-yaounde.org)

Ms MAFOPA Henriette Florence  
Chef de service de la législation rurale  
Chambre d'agriculture  
Yaoundé  
Phone : +237 99 97 27 01  
Email : [henriettemafopa@yahoo.fr](mailto:henriettemafopa@yahoo.fr)

Mrs AVOMO Victorine ABÉNÉ  
Chef de service de la promotion commerciale  
Chambre de Commerce  
B.P. 36  
Yaoundé  
Phone : +237 75 63 52 41  
Email : [avomovictorine@yahoo.fr](mailto:avomovictorine@yahoo.fr)

Mr NKANDI Hermann Henri  
Inspecteur Phytosanitaire Assermenté  
Ministère de l'agriculture et du développement  
Rural, Direction de la Réglementation et  
Contrôle de qualité  
B.P 2082  
Yaoundé  
Phone : + 237 99 80 87 24  
Email: [nkandihermann@yahoo.fr](mailto:nkandihermann@yahoo.fr)

Mr MOHAMADOU  
Directeur de qualité et normalisation  
de la Société AZUR SA.  
Task Force Syndustringam  
B.P. 378  
Douala  
Phone /Fax: +237 99688284/+237 33433699  
Email : [mohamadou@azur-sa.com](mailto:mohamadou@azur-sa.com) /  
[mohamadouazur@yahoo.fr](mailto:mohamadouazur@yahoo.fr)

Mr TOUNA L.M  
Chef de service  
Ministère de l'Agriculture et du Développement  
rural/DEPC  
Phone : +237 96162539  
Email : [tounson2005@yahoo.fr](mailto:tounson2005@yahoo.fr)

Ms DASSIE FANLE Rosette  
Quality Manager  
Etat Africain Company S.A.  
Douala  
Cameroun  
Phone: + 237 99677902  
Email: [dassie\\_rosette@yahoo.fr](mailto:dassie_rosette@yahoo.fr)

Dr NGAMBIA FUNKEU Roger  
Chief of Service  
MINEPIA  
Yaoundé,  
Phone: +237 77 95 80 01  
Email: [ngafuro@yahoo.com](mailto:ngafuro@yahoo.com)

Dr ESSOUNGOU NDEMBA Samuel  
Président  
Association Pour le Défense de Consommateurs  
B.P 187  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 77 73 56 82 / +237 22 00 21 87  
Email: [snungu@gmail.com](mailto:snungu@gmail.com)/  
[adconso@yahoo.com](mailto:adconso@yahoo.com)

Mr ISSI Alphonse  
Président  
Mouvement National des Consommateurs  
B.P 4074  
Yaoundé  
Phone : +237 99 96 65 47  
Fax: +237 22 22 62 62  
Email : [mouvementdesconsommateurs@yahoo.fr](mailto:mouvementdesconsommateurs@yahoo.fr)

Ms NNAMA Nkili Renée-Michelle  
Cadre  
Cellule de la Normalisation et de la Qualité  
Ministère du Commerce  
B.P 2997, SOA  
Phone : +237 99352555  
Fax : +237 22 22 3569  
Email : [renee\\_michele@hotmail.fr](mailto:renee_michele@hotmail.fr)

Ms DASSI Emilie  
Cadre  
CCIMA  
Phone : +237 99131630  
Fax : +237 22 22 47 76  
Email : [emfeutch9000@yahoo.com](mailto:emfeutch9000@yahoo.com)

**CAP-VERT**

Mr JOAO DOS SANTOS Gonçalves  
 Point Focal Codex- Directeur ARFA  
 Agence de Régulation des Produits Alimentaires  
 C.P 292, ASA  
 Praia  
 Phone: 238 2626410  
 Fax : 238 2622970  
 Email: [joao.s.goncalves@arfa.cv](mailto:joao.s.goncalves@arfa.cv)

Mrs GOMES de SÁ NOGUEIRA Augusta  
 Coordenadona Inspection des Aliments.  
 Responsable pour la Vigilance Epidémiologique  
 Membre du Comité Codex  
 Point Focal Notification OMC.  
 Ministère du Développement Rural, Direction  
 Général de l Agriculture, Sylviculture et Elevage  
 DGASP Achada de São Filipe  
 BP 278  
 Praia  
 Phone : 264 75 47 /39  
 Fax : 264 75 43/42  
 Email: [eduarda.nogueira@mdr.gov.cv](mailto:eduarda.nogueira@mdr.gov.cv)  
[edusanog@hotmail.com](mailto:edusanog@hotmail.com)

**CHAD/TCHAD**

Mrs NAISSSEM BELEMEL Françoise  
 Chef de division d'hygiène du milieu et  
 assainissement  
 Ministère de la santé publique  
 Ndjamenà 440  
 Phone: +26566462998  
 Email: [naibe-francoise@yahoo.fr](mailto:naibe-francoise@yahoo.fr)

Mr NGUETORA Guiradoumadji  
 Chef de division d'hygiène du milieu et  
 assainissement adjoint  
 Ministère de la santé publique  
 Ndjamenà 440  
 Phone: +26366260837  
 Email: [nguetoraa@yahoo.fr](mailto:nguetoraa@yahoo.fr)

**COMOROS**

Mr MANSOURI Ahamed  
 Chef du département Agroalimentaire  
 Point Focal du Codex Alimentarius  
 Vice-Président en charge du Ministère de la  
 production, de l'Environnement, de l'Energie, de  
 l'Industrie et de l'Artisanat  
 Grande Comore  
 Phone: +269 333 61 40/ 331 79 01  
 Email: [manouri1953.ah@hotmail.fr](mailto:manouri1953.ah@hotmail.fr)  
[dirmasaepe@yahoo.fr](mailto:dirmasaepe@yahoo.fr)

Mr HAMID Papa Abdallah  
 Point focal national de nutrition  
 Chargé des facteurs de risque de la maladie

Direction de lutte contre la maladie  
 Direction nationale de la santé  
 Ministère de-la santé  
 Route de la corniche, Bât. Projet Palu  
 Moroni  
 Phone: + 269 3342830  
 Email: [hamidpapa@yahoo.fr](mailto:hamidpapa@yahoo.fr)

**CONGO REPUBLIC OF/REPUBLIQUE DU CONGO**

Mr GALEBAÏ Daniel  
 Point focal Codex Alimentarius chef de  
 Service normes  
 Association congolaise de Codex/ Ministère de  
 l'Industrie  
 BP : 185 rue ombele talangai  
 Brazzaville  
 Phone: +242 06 85 44 021  
 Email : [galibaidani@yahoo.fr](mailto:galibaidani@yahoo.fr)

Mr ESSEA Boniface  
 Chef de Service Contrôle qualité et Sécurité  
 alimentaire  
 Ministère de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture  
 09, Rue Oyo Talangai  
 Brazzaville  
 Phone : + 242 05 56 32 406  
 Email: [essea\\_b@yahoo.fr](mailto:essea_b@yahoo.fr)

**CÔTE D'IVOIRE**

Dr EHOUSSOU Narcisse  
 Président  
 Comité National du Codex Alimentarius  
 20 BP 211  
 Abidjan 20  
 Phone: +225 01015596  
 Email: [narcehoussou@yahoo.fr](mailto:narcehoussou@yahoo.fr)

Prof DEMBELE Ardjouma  
 Head of Agrochemical and Ecotoxicology  
 Laboratory  
 Comité National du Codex Alimentarius  
 04 BP 504  
 Abidjan 04  
 Phone: +225 05959572  
 Fax: +225 20227117  
 Email: [ardjouma@yahoo.fr](mailto:ardjouma@yahoo.fr)

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO/CONGO, RÉPUBLIQUE DÉMOCRATIQUE**

Dr OLENGA Yuma Jean-Marie  
 Chargé de communication  
 Secrétariat Technique SPS et Codex Alimentarius  
 Comité national SPS et Codex Alimentarius  
 BP 8722 Kinshasa-Gombe

Kinshasa  
Phone: +243 998867155  
Email: [jm\\_olga@yahoo.fr](mailto:jm_olga@yahoo.fr)

Mr LUMBE RAMAZANI Lambert  
Chef de Division Direction de l'Expérimentation  
Agricole  
Institut National pour l'Étude et la Recherche  
Agronomique (INEPA)  
Ministère de la Recherche Scientifique  
BP : 2037 Kinshasa 13, avenue des cliniques  
Kinshasa-Gombe  
Phone : +243 81 51 68 294  
Email : [lambertlumbe@yahoo.fr](mailto:lambertlumbe@yahoo.fr)

#### DJIBOUTI

Mr MOUHARAM Fouad Abdallah  
Chef de service de contrôle des normes et  
de la qualité  
Direction du Commerce et de la Normalisation  
Ministère du Commerce  
B.P 24  
Phone: +25377821194  
Fax: +25321354909  
Email: [marahuom@hotmail.com](mailto:marahuom@hotmail.com)

#### GABON

Dr NDONG BIYOO  
Président du Comité National Codex  
Ministère de l'Agriculture  
Phone : +241 07252751  
Email : [ndong\\_ndong@yahoo.fr](mailto:ndong_ndong@yahoo.fr)

Mrs MESSAN ZOUNA Pauline  
Vice Président Comite National Codex  
Ministère de l'Economie  
BP 8793  
Libreville  
Phone: + 24106240731  
Email: [p.messanzouna@yahoo.fr](mailto:p.messanzouna@yahoo.fr)

Mrs OBAME Blanche Emilienne  
Secrétaire Permanent  
Comite National du Codex Alimentarius  
Ministère de l'Agriculture  
BP 8704 Libreville  
Phone: + 24106067215  
Email: [mezouebianche@yahoo.fr](mailto:mezouebianche@yahoo.fr)

Dr MBA BEKOUNG Patrick  
Directeur Général  
Office National des Laboratoires Agricoles  
Ministère de l'Agriculture  
BP 136  
Libreville  
Phonel: + 24107030396  
Email: [mbabekoungpat@yahoo.fr](mailto:mbabekoungpat@yahoo.fr)

Mr KASSA M'VOUBOU Félicien  
Chef de Service National d'Hygiène Publique  
Ministère de la Santé  
Comite National Codex  
BP 940  
Libreville  
Phone: + 24101763172 / 07331353  
Email: [kasavubu2005@yahoo.fr](mailto:kasavubu2005@yahoo.fr)

Mr MOUAYA Gaston Ulrich  
Chargé d'Etudes direction Général de l'Industrie  
Ministère de l'Industrie et des Mines  
Comite National Codex  
BP 784  
Libreville  
Phone: + 24106804176 / 04649782  
Email: [mouayagaston@yahoo.fr](mailto:mouayagaston@yahoo.fr)

Mr MEVIANE KAPAJIKA Patrick  
Agent  
Ministère de l'Industrie et des Mines  
Libreville  
Phone: + 24107487405  
Email: [patrick9173@yahoo.fr](mailto:patrick9173@yahoo.fr)

Ms NOLLET AGNURIWENGUE Anita  
Agent  
Ministère de l'Industrie et des Mines  
Libreville  
Phone: + 24106735302  
Email: [anitanollet@yahoo.fr](mailto:anitanollet@yahoo.fr)

#### GAMBIA/GAMBIE

Mr PHALL Modou Cheyassin  
Codex Contact Point  
Executive Director  
National Nutrition Agency  
PMB 163  
Banjul  
Phone: +220 9954038  
Email: [modoucheyassinphall@yahoo.com](mailto:modoucheyassinphall@yahoo.com)

Mr SONKO Landing  
Head  
Plant Protection Services  
Yundum  
Phone: +220 9344003  
Email: [sonkokebba@gmail.com](mailto:sonkokebba@gmail.com)

#### GHANA

Professor SEFA-DEDEH Samuel  
Vice Chair, Codex Alimentarius Commission  
Department of Food Process Engineering  
Faculty of Engineering Sciences  
University of Ghana  
Legon  
Accra  
Phone: +233 27 7553090

Email: [sefad@ug.edu.gh](mailto:sefad@ug.edu.gh)

Ms OKOREE Joyce  
 Manager  
 Codex Contact Point  
 Ghana Standards Authority  
 P.O. BOX MB 245  
 Accra  
 Phone: + 233 244 381 351 / +233 02 519 758  
 Email: [codex@gsa.gov.gh](mailto:codex@gsa.gov.gh) , [jooko88@yahoo.com](mailto:jooko88@yahoo.com)

Ms OSEI Celestine  
 Assistant Standards Officer  
 Ghana Standards Authority  
 P.O. Box MB 245  
 Accra  
 Phone: +233 243 187 857  
 Fax: +233 302 500 231  
 E-Mail: [codex@gsa.gov.gh](mailto:codex@gsa.gov.gh)

Mr VAN ESS Kwamina  
 Kwamina Van-Ess and Associates  
 Accra  
 Phone: +233 244 653 167  
 Email: [kwaminav@yahoo.com](mailto:kwaminav@yahoo.com)

Mr OPPONG-OTOO John  
 Standards Officer  
 Ghana Standards Authority  
 P.O. Box MB 245  
 Accra  
 Phone: + 233 243 785 375  
 Email: [nanapong23@yahoo.com](mailto:nanapong23@yahoo.com)

Mr OSEI Patrick  
 Regulatory Officer II  
 Food and Drugs Authority  
 P.O.Box KF 243  
 Accra  
 Phone: +233 264 088 756  
 E-Mail: [fdbpatosei@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:fdbpatosei@yahoo.co.uk)

#### **GUINEA-BISSAU/GUINÉE-BISSAU**

Mr INJAI Julio Malam  
 Point focal du CNCA  
 Ministère de l'Agriculture  
 BP : 844 Granja de Pessube  
 Bissau  
 Phone : +245 662 1182  
 Fax : +245 322 10 19  
 Email: [jumaingw@hotmail.com](mailto:jumaingw@hotmail.com)

Dr GOMEZ FERREIRA Pina Ferreira  
 Issis Julieta  
 Directora  
 Direcção dos serviços de saúde ambiental  
 e Higiene Pública/ MINSÁ  
 CP nº50 Ministerio da Saúde e de  
 Solidariedade Social

Bissau  
 Phone :+ 245 66 06 908  
 Email : [ijupiferg@hotmail.com](mailto:ijupiferg@hotmail.com)

#### **GUINEA EQUATORIAL/GUINÉE ÉQUATORIALE**

Dr NDJENG MBA Pablo  
 Prof analisis de alimentos(Universidad UNGE)  
 Universidad Nacional Guinea Ecuatorial  
 AVda HASSAN II S/N Malabo G.E  
 Tel: +240 22 25 92 422  
 Email: [pablondjengmba@yahoo.fr](mailto:pablondjengmba@yahoo.fr)

Dr MBA NDONG OBONO Antonio bonifacio  
 Medico veterinario  
 Minister de agricultura y bisques  
 Avenida HASSANII de Malabo G.E  
 Phone: +240 222 685 855  
 Email : [ambandong@yahoo.es](mailto:ambandong@yahoo.es)

#### **KENYA**

Mrs ONYANGO Alice  
 Manager  
 Kenya Bureau of Standards  
 PO 54974  
 Nairobi  
 Phone: +2546948303  
 Fax: +254 609660  
 Email: [akothe@kebs.org](mailto:akothe@kebs.org)  
[Info@kebs.org](mailto:Info@kebs.org)

Dr GICHIA Moses  
 Deputy Director of Veterinary Services  
 Department of Veterinary Service  
 P.O Private Bag, Kangemi  
 Nairobi  
 Phone: +254 733557134  
 Email: [medwrin@yahoo.com](mailto:medwrin@yahoo.com)

Mr KILONZO Robert  
 Head division of food safety and quality  
 Ministry of public health and sanitation  
 Po.box: 30016-00100  
 Nairobi  
 Phone: + 254 271 70 77  
 Fax: +254 271 00 65  
 Email : [rmkilonzo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:rmkilonzo@yahoo.co.uk)

#### **LESOTHO**

Mr MAKARA Motjoka  
 Chief Standards Officer  
 Ministry of Trade & Industry Cooperatives and  
 Marketing  
 PO Box 747  
 Maseru 100  
 Phone: +26622322113  
 Fax: +26622324642

Email: [lessza@leo.co.ls](mailto:lessza@leo.co.ls)

Dr MASENTLE SEEISO Tabitha  
 Director Veterinary Public Health  
 Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security  
 Department of Livestock Services Private Bag A82  
 Maseru  
 Phone: +266 223 172 84  
 Fax : +266 223 11 500  
 Email: [seeisotabitha@yahoo.com](mailto:seeisotabitha@yahoo.com)

#### MADAGASCAR

Mr IARIVONY Rabotondriamihamina  
 Chef de service des normes alimentaires  
 Ministère de la santé publique  
 Agence de contrôle de sécurité sanitaire  
 et de la qualité des denrées alimentaires  
 IVG 114 Behorivika Ankaditapaka  
 Antananarivo 101  
 Phone: +261340114059  
 Email: [iarivony51@yahoo.fr](mailto:iarivony51@yahoo.fr)

Mr RAKOTONDRAVONY Hervé francis  
 Président  
 Comité national du Codex Alimentarius  
 BP : 1042 nanisara Antananarivo.101  
 Antananarivo  
 Phone : +261 32 02 58 886  
 Email : [spcplabo@noov.mg](mailto:spcplabo@noov.mg)

#### MALI

Mr KONE Farakoro  
 Chef de la section législation et normes  
 Direction nationale de l'agriculture  
 PB 1098  
 Bamako  
 Phone: +22376306078  
 Email: [farakorokone@hotmail.com](mailto:farakorokone@hotmail.com)

Dr COULIBALY Drissa Dounanké  
 Chef de section inspection vétérinaire  
 Direction nationale des services vétérinaires  
 03 BP 220  
 Bamako 03  
 Phone: +22376023473  
 Fax : +2232025229  
 Email: [dcoulibaly9@yahoo.fr](mailto:dcoulibaly9@yahoo.fr)

#### MAURITANIA/MAURITANIE

Dr BRAHIMELKORY MOHAMED SALEM  
 Mohamed  
 Point Focal National du Codex  
 Directeur de l'Institut National de Recherches  
 en Santé Publique (INRSP)  
 Ministère de la santé  
 BP 695  
 Nouakchott

Phone: +22245253134  
 Fax : + 22245292649  
 Email: [melkory69@yahoo.fr](mailto:melkory69@yahoo.fr)

Mr CHEIKH Elghady Issehmou  
 Secrétariat du Comité National du Codex  
 INRSP  
 BP 695  
 Nouakchott  
 Phone: +22246440556  
 Email: [elghadyi@yahoo.fr](mailto:elghadyi@yahoo.fr)

#### MOROCCO/MAROC

Mr SAAD Lhoussaine  
 Chef de la Division du Contrôle des Produits  
 végétaux et d'origine végétale  
 Office National de Sécurité Sanitaire des Produits  
 Alimentaires  
 Ministère de l'agriculture et de la pêche maritime  
 Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui –  
 Agdal - Rabat  
 Phone: + 212 5 37 67 65 30  
 Fax: + 212 5 68 20 49  
 Email: [saad.lhoussaine@gmail.com](mailto:saad.lhoussaine@gmail.com)

Dr AZZI Abdelghani  
 Chef du service de l'inspection des produits  
 animaux  
 Office national de sécurité sanitaire des  
 produits alimentaires  
 Avenue Hadj Ahmed Cherkaoui –  
 Agdal - Rabat  
 Phone: + 212 5 37 67 65 25  
 Fax: + 212 5 68 20 4  
 Email: [abdelghniazzi@gmail.com](mailto:abdelghniazzi@gmail.com)

#### NIGERIA

Mrs ESHIETT Margaret Efiog  
 Deputy Director  
 Head Food, Codex Contact Point Nigeria  
 Standards Organization of Nigeria  
 13/14 Victoria Arobieke Street  
 Lekki Phase I  
 Lagos  
 Phone: +234 8023179774  
 Email: [megesciatt@yahoo.com](mailto:megesciatt@yahoo.com)

Dr MAJASAN Ademola Adetokunbo  
 Deputy Director  
 Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural  
 Development  
 FCDA Secretariat, Area 11, GARKI  
 Abuja  
 Phone: +234 0855178412  
 Email: [demmyjash@yahoo.com](mailto:demmyjash@yahoo.com)

Dr ADEGBOYE Abimbola Opeyemi  
 Assistant Director

National Agency for Food and Drug  
Administration and Control  
Plot 2032, Olusegun Obasanjo Way  
Wuse Zone 7  
Abuja  
Phone: +234 8053170810  
Email: [adegboye.a@nafdac.gov.ng](mailto:adegboye.a@nafdac.gov.ng);  
[bimbotica@yahoo.com](mailto:bimbotica@yahoo.com)

Mrs AGBANA Omotola  
Standards Officer 1  
Standards Organisation of Nigeria  
Plot 1687, LOME Street Wuse Zone 7  
Abuja  
Phone: +234 8034526706  
Email: [toladiamond@yahoo.com](mailto:toladiamond@yahoo.com)

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC/  
RÉPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE**

Mr SANA Romain Serge  
Chef de Service des normes et de la qualité  
Ministère du commerce et de l'industrie  
BP 1988  
Bangui  
Phone: +236 75 05 84 98  
E-mail: [sromainserge@yahoo.fr](mailto:sromainserge@yahoo.fr)  
[codexcentrafrique@gmail.com](mailto:codexcentrafrique@gmail.com)

Mr. LANGO-YAYA Ernest  
Chef de Service dxe Microbiologie Alimentaire  
Ministère de la Santé Publique  
Laboratoire Nationale de Biologie Clinique et de  
Santé publique de Bangui  
B.P 1426  
Bangui  
Phone: 750 446 05 / 72 01 7008  
Fax: 21 61 81 80  
Email : [elangoyaya@gmail.com](mailto:elangoyaya@gmail.com)

**REPUBLIC OF GUINEA/RÉPUBLIQUE DE  
GUINÉE**

Mr SAKOUVOGUI Alphone Vohou  
Chef de section de sécurité sanitaire des aliments  
Ministère de la santé et hygiène publique  
Direction nationale de l'hygiène publique  
BP 1689 Conakry  
Phone: +22464506789  
Email: [vsakou@yahoo.fr](mailto:vsakou@yahoo.fr)

Mr. SÏLLA Aly  
Chef Section Agroalimentaire  
Institut Guinéen de Normalisation et de  
Métrologie – IGMN  
B.P 1639  
Conakry  
Phone : +224 62 47 52 29  
Email : [alybagatema@yahoo.fr](mailto:alybagatema@yahoo.fr)

**SOUTH AFRICA/AFRIQUE DU SUD**

Mr. MATLALA Malose Daniel  
Deputy Director Food Control  
Department of Health  
Private Bag X858  
Pretoria  
Postcode : 0001  
Phone: +27123958789  
Fax: +27123958854  
Email: [cacpsa@health.gov.za](mailto:cacpsa@health.gov.za)

Mr. MAKHAFOLA Billy Malose  
Deputy Director  
Department of Agriculture, Forestry and Fishery  
(DAFF)  
Private Bag X343  
Pretoria  
Postcode: 0001  
Phone: +12 319 6023  
Fax: + 12 319 6055  
Email: [billym@daff.gov.za](mailto:billym@daff.gov.za)

Mr. DEON Jacobs  
Principal inspector  
National Regulator for Compulsory Specifications  
P.O BOX : 12b railway road montague gardens  
Cape Town  
Phone: +0027 21 52 63 400  
Fax: +oo2727 21 526 34 51  
Email: [jacobsdc@nrsc.org.za](mailto:jacobsdc@nrsc.org.za)

**SENEGAL/SÉNÉGAL**

Dr DIOUF Amadou  
Président du CNCA Sénégal  
Ministère de la santé et action sociale  
Université de Cheikh Anta DIOP (UCAD)  
Cheikh Anta  
Dakar  
Phone: +221776449823  
Email: [amdiouf@refer.sn](mailto:amdiouf@refer.sn)

Mr NIANG Ousseynou dit Diallo  
Chef du bureau assurance de qualité à la DSV  
37 avenue Pasteur  
BP 67  
Dakar  
Phone: +221775187777  
Email: [ousseynou.niang.diallo@gmail.com](mailto:ousseynou.niang.diallo@gmail.com)

Dr MAME COUMBA CODOU Faye  
Point Focal du Codex  
Ministère de la Santé et de l'Action Sociale  
Rue Aime Cesaire Dakar FANN  
B.P 4024  
Dakar  
Phone : +24 77 55 66 478  
Email: [mamecoumba@yahoo.com](mailto:mamecoumba@yahoo.com)  
[Codexsenegal@gov.sn](mailto:Codexsenegal@gov.sn)

**SEYCHELLES**

Ms YOUPA Naomi  
 Head Food Control Unit  
 Public Health Department  
 Ministry of Health  
 P.O. Box 52 M Fleuri  
 Victoria, Mahé  
 Phone: +2484385195  
 Fax: +2484225714  
 Email: [naomi.youpa@health.gov.sc](mailto:naomi.youpa@health.gov.sc)

Ms KATE Catherina  
 Public Health Officer – Food Control Unit  
 Public Health Department  
 Ministry of Health  
 Seychelles Hospital  
 Victoria, Mahé  
 Phone: +2484388195  
 Fax: +2484225714  
 Email: [catherinakate@hotmail.com](mailto:catherinakate@hotmail.com)

**SWAZILAND**

Mr DLAMINI Edmund J.  
 Chief Environmental Health Officer  
 Swaziland Government Ministry of Health  
 Box 5, Mbabane H100  
 Phone: +268 2404 9351  
 Fax: +26824049351  
 Email: [edmunddlamini@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:edmunddlamini@yahoo.co.uk)

Mr SABELO MUZIKAYISE Masuku  
 Environmental & Public Health Manager  
 Matsapha Municipality  
 PO Box 1790  
 Matsapha M202  
 Phone: +268 78020864  
 Fax: +26825186646  
 Email: [sabma52003@yahoo.com](mailto:sabma52003@yahoo.com)  
[masukus@matsapha.co.sz](mailto:masukus@matsapha.co.sz)

**TOGO**

Mr KAZIA Tchala  
 Codex Contact Point  
 Ministry of Agriculture  
 PO Box 1163  
 Lomé  
 Phone: +22890025525  
 Fax: +22522251559  
 Email: [kaziatchala@yahoo.fr](mailto:kaziatchala@yahoo.fr)

**UGANDA/UGANDA**

Mr SEKITOLEKO Patrick  
 Manager, International Liaison  
 Uganda National Bureau of Standards  
 P.O. Box 6329  
 Kampala

Phone: +256 414 222367/9  
 Fax: +256 414 286123  
 Email: [Patrick.ssekitoleko@unbs.go.ug](mailto:Patrick.ssekitoleko@unbs.go.ug)  
[patricksekitoleko@hotmail.com](mailto:patricksekitoleko@hotmail.com)

**ZAMBIA/ZAMBIE**

Dr YVONNE GOMA Fusya  
 Senior Epidemio-Surveillance &  
 Information Officer  
 Ministry of Agriculture-Department of  
 Veterinary Services, DVS NALIC  
 P.O Box 50060  
 Postcode: 10101  
 Lusaka  
 Phone: +260 211 229 470  
 Fax: + 260 211 229 470  
 Email: [f\\_goma@yahoo.com](mailto:f_goma@yahoo.com)

Ms NGALA Florence  
 Chief Environmental Health Officer-Food  
 Safety National Codex Focal Point  
 Ministry of Health  
 P.O Box 30205  
 Postcode: 10101  
 Lusaka  
 Phone: +260 977 80 84 40  
 Fax: + 260 256814  
 Email: [ngalaflo@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:ngalaflo@yahoo.co.uk)

**OBSERVER COUNTRIES  
PAYS OBSERVATEURS****CANADA**

Dr GODEFROY Samuel  
 Vice Chair of the Commission  
 Director-General  
 Food Directorate  
 Health Canada  
 251 Sir Frederick Banting Driveway  
 Room E237 (2202E)  
 Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0K9  
 Phone: +1 613 957 1821  
 Fax: +1 613 957 1784  
 Email: [Samuel.godefroy@hc-sc.gc.ca](mailto:Samuel.godefroy@hc-sc.gc.ca)

**INDIA/INDE**

Mr DAVE Sanjay  
 Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius  
 Commission  
 Food Safety and Standards Authority of India  
 Ministry of Health & Family Welfare  
 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, FDA Bhawan, Kotla Road  
 New Delhi  
 Postcode 110002  
 Phone: +91 11 23237436  
 Fax: +91 11 23237436  
 Email: [dave.codex@fssai.gov.in](mailto:dave.codex@fssai.gov.in)



Mr DWIVEDI Gaurav  
 Assistant Director (Marketing)  
 Spices Board , Ministry of Commerce and  
 Industries, Govt. Of India  
 Old Market Yard Complex,  
 Chuttugunta Centre,  
 Opposite SBI  
 Guntur  
 Phone: +91863-2338570  
 Fax: +91863-2338570  
 Email: [gauravdwivedi.sb@gmail.com](mailto:gauravdwivedi.sb@gmail.com)

#### SWITZERLAND/SUISSE

Ms OCHIENG PERNET Awilo  
 Vice-Chairperson of the Codex Alimentarius  
 Commission  
 Division of International Affairs  
 Swiss Federal Office of Public Health  
 Post Box CH-3003 Bern  
 Phone; +41 313220042  
 Fax: +41 313221131  
 Email: [awilo.ochieng@bag.admin.ch](mailto:awilo.ochieng@bag.admin.ch)

#### UNITED STATES OF AMERICA/ETATS- UNIES D'AMERIQUE

Mr LOWERY Kenneth  
 International Issues Analyst  
 U.S. Codex Office  
 1400 Independence Avenue, SW  
 Room 4861 – South Building  
 Washington DC 20251  
 Phone: 1 202 690 4042  
 Fax: +1 202 720 3157  
 Email: [kenneth.lowery@fsis.usda.gov](mailto:kenneth.lowery@fsis.usda.gov)

#### INTERNATIONAL GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ORGANISATIONS GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES

##### AU

Mr COLY Raphael  
 Secretary-General  
 African Union (AU)  
 P.O. Box 3243  
 Addis Abeba  
 Ethiopia  
 Phone: +251 1 517700  
 Fax: +251 1 512622  
 Email : [raphael.coly@au-ibar.org](mailto:raphael.coly@au-ibar.org)

##### UEMOA

Dr DOUMBIA Moussa  
 Union Economique et Monétaire Ouest Africaine  
 (UEMOA)

Chargé de la sécurité sanitaire des aliments  
 Avenue du Professeur Joseph KI-ZERBO  
 01, BP 543  
 Ouagadougou 01  
 Burkina Faso  
 Phone: +226 50 31 88 73  
 Fax: +226 50 31 88 72  
 Email: [mdoumbia@uemoa.int](mailto:mdoumbia@uemoa.int)

#### INTERNATIONAL NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS/ORGANISATIONS NON-GOUVERNEMENTALES INTERNATIONALES

##### AEDA-EFLA

Ms ARAB Rola  
 Association européenne pour le droit de  
 l'alimentation (AEDA/EFLA)  
 rue de l' Association 50  
 1000 Brussels  
 Belgium  
 Phone: +32 2 209 11 42  
 Fax: +32 2 219 73 42  
 Email: [secretariat@efla-aeda.org](mailto:secretariat@efla-aeda.org)

##### IFAH

Dr ESPEISSE Olivier  
 Vétérinaire responsable  
 Elanco Animal Health  
 Immeuble Le Riva  
 24-30 Boulevard Vital Bouhot  
 92200 Neuilly/Seine  
 France  
 Phone: + 33 1 55 49 35 35  
 Fax: + 33 1 55 49 36 70  
 Email: [espeisse\\_olivier@elanco.com](mailto:espeisse_olivier@elanco.com)

##### IFPRI

Dr MACKENZIE Anne  
 Standards and Regulatory Advisor  
 International Food Policy Research Institute  
 2033 K. St. NW  
 Washington, DC  
 20806 – 1002  
 U.S.A.  
 Phone: +1 613 692 0211  
 Email: [amackenzie@rogers.com](mailto:amackenzie@rogers.com)

Dr BALL Anna-Marie  
 Country Manager / Uganda  
 International Food Policy research Institute  
 PO Box 28565  
 Kampala  
 Uganda  
 Phone: +256 414285060/084  
 Email: [a.ball@cgiar.org](mailto:a.ball@cgiar.org)

**ISDI**

Mrs LEONE Jolanta  
Member ISDI  
Rue de l'Association 50  
Brussels 1000  
Belgium  
Phone: +30222091143  
Fax: +3222197342  
Email: [secretariat@isdi.org](mailto:secretariat@isdi.org)

**FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS (FAO)**

Mrs SEMEDO Maria Helena de Morais  
FAO sous-Directrice Générale  
Représentante Régionale pour l'Afrique  
FAO Building Gamel Abdul Nasser Road  
P.O. Box GP 1628  
Accra  
Ghana  
Phone: +233 30 2675000  
Fax +233 30 2668427  
Email [MariaHelena.Semedo@fao.org](mailto:MariaHelena.Semedo@fao.org)

Mr KAMANZI Jean  
Regional Food Safety & Quality Officer  
FAO Sub-regional Office for Southern Africa (SFS)  
Block 1, Tendeseka Office Park  
Cnr Samora Machel Ave/Renfrew Road  
P.O.Box 3730  
Harare  
Zimbabwe  
Phone: +263 4 253655-8  
Fax: + 263 4 700724  
Email: [jean.kamanzi@fao.org](mailto:jean.kamanzi@fao.org)

Ms TONNOIR Florence  
Nutrition, Food Security and Livelihoods  
FAO Représentation du SFC  
Bureau Sous Régional pour l'Afrique Centrale  
Cité de la Démocratie  
L ibreville 2643  
Gabon  
Tel.: + 241 04 38 00 48  
Email: [florence.tonnoir@fao.org](mailto:florence.tonnoir@fao.org)

Ms BESSY Catherine  
Food Safety & Quality Officer  
Nutrition and Consumer Protection Division  
Food and Agriculture Organization  
Via delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +39 06 5705 3679  
Fax: +39 06 5705 4593  
Email: [catherine.bessy@fao.org](mailto:catherine.bessy@fao.org)

**WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION (WHO)**

Mrs MULHOLLAND Catherine  
Administrator, FAO/WHO Codex Trust Fund  
World Health Organization  
20 Avenue Appia  
Geneva  
Phone: +41 22 791 3080  
Fax: +41 22 791 4807  
Email: [mulhollandc@who.int](mailto:mulhollandc@who.int)

Dr KARIUKI Sam  
Consultant  
World Health Organization  
Regional Office for Africa  
Cité du Djoué  
P.O.Box 06  
Brazzaville  
Republic of Congo  
Phone: + 47 241 39135  
E-mail: [kariukis@afro.who.int](mailto:kariukis@afro.who.int)

Mr Samuel BESONG  
NPO / MEDICATIONS ESSENTIELS  
World Health Organization  
B.P 155 Yaoundé  
Cameroun  
Phone/ Fax: +237 91 69 86 98 / +237 22 21 10 77  
Email: [besongs@cm.afro.who.int](mailto:besongs@cm.afro.who.int)

**CAMEROON SECRETARIAT/ SECRETARIAT DU CAMEROUN**

Mr ETOUNDI Jean Martin  
Technical Secretary of National Codex  
Committee and Food Safety  
Sub Director of Quality and Promotion in  
Standards and Quality Agency  
P. O. Box 8186  
Yaoundé  
Phone: + 23777742241/ +23797143633  
Email: [etoundijme@yahoo.fr](mailto:etoundijme@yahoo.fr)

Mr MOHAMADOU Awal  
Cadre à la Sous Direction de la Promotion  
Agence des Normes et de la Qualité  
CNCOSAC/CCAFRICA  
B.P 14966  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99 42 07 80  
Email : [moawaln@yahoo.fr](mailto:moawaln@yahoo.fr)

Mr ETABI BIKIE Yannick Herve  
Chargé d'Etude Assistant N°2  
Ministère des Mines, de l'Industrie et du  
développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99 43 98 07  
Email : [etabiodex@yahoo.fr](mailto:etabiodex@yahoo.fr)

Mrs CHOUYA TCHAKOUTE Garone Josiane  
Contact Point of Codex  
Standards and Quality Agency  
P. O. Box 14966  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99542384  
Fax: +237 22226496  
Email: [pointfocalcameround@yahoo.fr](mailto:pointfocalcameround@yahoo.fr)

Mrs MBIDA MINDJEME Vivi Bertille  
Cadre d'Appui  
Comite National du Codex Alimentarius et de la  
Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 74 25 30 77  
Email : [vivibertillem@yahoo.fr](mailto:vivibertillem@yahoo.fr)

Mrs KAYITAVU Ingratia  
Membre du Secrétariat Technique  
Ministère des Mines, de l'Industrie et du  
développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone. +237 77 57 42 83  
Email : [kayitavu@yahoo.fr](mailto:kayitavu@yahoo.fr)

Mr NDI ATEBA Jean Marie  
Cadre d'Appui  
Comite National du Codex Alimentarius et de la  
Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 77 10 55 33  
Email : [ndjeama@yahoo.fr](mailto:ndjeama@yahoo.fr)

Mr NDEGUE Leonard Magloire  
Cadre d'Appui  
Comite National du Codex Alimentarius et de la  
Sécurité Sanitaire des Aliments  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99 76 41 56  
Email : [ndegueleonard2013@yahoo.fr](mailto:ndegueleonard2013@yahoo.fr)

Mr EBOA MPILE Felix  
Membre du Secrétariat Technique  
Ministère des Mines, de l'Industrie et du  
développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 95 17 25 77  
Email : [mpileeboa@yahoo.fr](mailto:mpileeboa@yahoo.fr)

Mr CHAPWOUO TCHAKOUTE Landry Delphin  
Membre du Secrétariat Technique  
Ministère des Mines, de l'Industrie et du  
développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 99 91 68 22  
Email : [landryzap@gmail.com](mailto:landryzap@gmail.com)

Mr MBELE LAWSON Gaëtan Frigate  
Chauffeur  
Ministère des Mines, de l'Industrie et du

développement Technologique  
Yaoundé  
Phone: +237 79 42 31 12  
Email : [lawsongaetan@yahoo.fr](mailto:lawsongaetan@yahoo.fr)

**CODEX SECRETARIAT  
SECRETARIAT DU CODEX**

Ms CAROLISSEN Verna  
Food Standards Officer  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +39 06 5705 5629  
Fax: +39 06 5705 3057  
Email: [verna.carolissen@fao.org](mailto:verna.carolissen@fao.org)

Ms DOYRAN Selma  
Secretary, Codex Alimentarius Commission  
Joint FAO/WHO Food Standards Programme  
Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)  
Viale delle Terme di Caracalla  
00153 Rome  
Italy  
Phone: +39 06 5705 5826  
Fax: +39 06 5705 3057  
Email: [selma.doyran@fao.org](mailto:selma.doyran@fao.org)